

Client: Chicago Zine Fest.

Date: 03/08/2013.

Event: Independent Literary Festival.

Captioner: Carrie.

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>>> Hello? Okay. Hi, everybody. Welcome to 2013 Chicago Zine Fest. Yeah! We're all really excited you're here. We spent a long time putting this together and hope that everybody enjoys the weekend.

My name is Leslie, I'm one of the organizers of Chicago Zine Fest. We're just going to run through like the events of the weekend so you know what is coming up. But thanks for coming. Here's Heather.

>> Hi. I'm Heather. Thanks for coming. Thanks, guys. Today we're starting with an awesome panel that we are very super excited about. It is called -- writing about health, disability and accessibility in zines. We have Dave Roche, Maranda Elizabeth and Kerri Radley.

>> You can get a bite to eat. Our next event is for kids. They like things, too.

>> Hi. I'm Jacqueline a first year organizer. After the youth reading, immediately following the youth reading after the same location. 1331 North Avenue, um, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. will be our exhibitor reading. Which is awesome. We have many exhibitors and invited guests reading.

>> Hi. I'm Johnny. Thanks, coming. All of the friendly and smiling faces. Following, to close the night, a place that you guys should go to before you leave this weekend. Chicago's HQ. We're going to have a fun event called the zine lose or draw. It is like Pictionary meets zine trivia, not trivia, but

whatever, it is like Pictionary, I'm being told. It is hosted by Neil, an ex-organizer. That's awesome. So, check it out to close out tonight.

>> Hi. I'm Jen. Then tomorrow is tabling day with all our, over 200 people will be tabling here and on the 8th floor of this building. There's going to be workshops on the 8th floor and the 2nd floor and all sorts of awesomeness. So -- you should come to that between 11:00 and 6:00. Or if you're tabling sign-in between 9:00 and 10:00 please.

>> Hi. I'm Jami. I'm also a first year Chicago Zine Fest organizer. I'm going to be facilitating this year's panel. We're going to get started right away. I'm going to let the panelists -- each of you do a short reading before we get into the questions. Without further ado. Kerri Radley.

[Applause]

>> Hi. My name is Kerri. I do a zine called Deafula it is about my experience being a deaf person. I write about different ways in which my deafness has influenced my life, affected by relationships, to get a job, all sorts of different things. So, to introduce, I'm going to read from my very first issue. It talks about how I lost my hearing and give you a little bit of background how I fit into the deaf space.

I'm a 28-year-old lady --

[Low audio]

Who lives in Philly with a dog and a cat. I like to do fun stuff like read, go to shows, go to grad school and I'm deaf.

I was born with some minimum hearing loss. No one knows where it came from. Probably not my genes because everyone in my family is hearing except my older brother who has a loss of hearing. He wore hearing aids for a short while, but hated them. He talks on the phone and does normal hearing things. Me, when I was 5-year-old I contracted scarlet fever. Now I'm deaf. Hearing loss can occur in

your outer, middle or inner ear for a variety of stages and at any stage in life. This is in the middle ear, this can be from toxic chemicals abnormalities, like problem like scarlet fever. There is no cure. Some benefits from hearing aids and cochlear hearing plants, but some don't. Hearing loss can occur at any stage, but it is mostly childhood. When it happens in a child life, it can have huge ramifications. I was lucky, but lucky feels like a weird way to put it to contract scarlet fever when I did, by then I already acquired my first language, English. The hefty work of acquiring your first language begins by 5. You learned the language, master its basic use and have the skills for vocabulary. However, then children go on to acquire new vocabulary for many, many more years. This is why I have a big problem mispronouncing bigger words most of my life. I have to read them and guess at how they sound. I don't understand them. I don't hear them, I have to read them on the page and guess. I start to read them one way, people will try to teach me how to do it, but it is a hard habit to break. I have mispronounced words like -- post humus -- contemplate, I don't know how to say any of them.

And another factor that worked in my favor is that hearing loss resulted from a childhood disease can be gradual. I started wearing hearing aids when I was 5. They were not that powerful back then. When I was young, my mom would call out good night from the stairwell with hearing aids in her hand and I can hear. Now, I can't hear someone next to my head without my hearing aids on. I had a loss all through grade school, a sharp drop in middle school and another drop in high school, by the time I was 18, my hearing loss was in the severely profound range. I was deaf. I was mainstream, I went to public school, my language skills were able to blossom. I was deaf, I can talk, I can communicate clearly in English, my voice is kind of normal, not normal, but kind of normal, with only a hint of nasalness that comes out when I'm nervous. I like to call this my deaf speak. The weirder and more awkward in the situation, my speech starts to breakdown and I slur and talk out of my nose. Because I was around

hearing people growing up, my family is hearing, my friends are hearing. I developed good lip reading skills. As a child most people I interacted with never knew I was deaf. Now it is harder to lipread my way through a conversation. But I still manage okay.

A lot of people have the misconception that all deaf people cannot speak or communicate in English at all, but I'm an example of the spectrum of deafness and so many factors can come into play regarding communication. I'm deaf, but I can talk in English, this blows people's minds. All deaf people are different. Some have profound loss or hear a large part of their loss before language is complete. It can be difficult to master verbal language. Can you imagine trying to speak a language that you only read and never heard spoken? Imagine trying to do this without hearing anything spoken ever.

It is not only in the medical aspect, type of loss and how to communicate and culturally. Deaf is a free-standing and respected culture. This might seem weird to hearing people who think that deafness is a disability, but it exists as a community with cultural identity. Deaf culture has its own language, norms and values, idioms and jokes. Within it, deafness is not seen as a disability, but a common attribute shared by its members. Culturally deaf people, we don't see deafness as a detriment, there is a large, rich vibrant culture and community surrounding it.

[Applause]

>> Our next panelist is Maranda Elizabeth. I'll let them introduce themselves.

>> Hey. My name is Maranda Elizabeth. I have been making a zine called Telegram for a decade now and I published my zines. I write about mental health and self-care and friendship and adventures and all of those kinds of things. I write ridiculously personal stories. I write about being on the psych ward too many times to count. I like to tell people how I identify, which is as a writer, zinester, daydreamer, homebody, genderqueerdo. I'm wonder how it is going to come up on the cart. An introvert.

I use the pronoun they, not she, I appreciate when people respect that.

I'm going to read a little bit from issue 23 of my zine Telegram. I wrote this after I came out of the hospital called Homewood, it is a mental health treatment center with different wards for mood disorders and eating disorders and recovery from addictions that kind of thing. I was there for two months. Here I go.

I was diagnosed with border line personality disorder while I was at Homewood, it was realized I had every symptom, I knew what I was working with and make decisions along the road of recovery. I had been misdiagnosed with bipolar disorder several years back and spend all of this time being treated for something I didn't have. I've done a lot of work to let go of those resentments but it comes back sometimes, I still get upset, but I'm learning I can't change the past. My anger and regret is not useful unless I'm doing something constructive and healthy, otherwise they are just negative feelings. I didn't know what I was diagnosed with. I knew more women than men are diagnosed. Someone believe it doesn't exist and Susanna had it, "Girl Interrupted," again I feel like I missed out on a lot not being diagnosed sooner, the symptoms are obvious, but if you're talking to doctors 5 minutes at a time and not able to express what is going on with you and misinterpret or don't give a shit. It is not surprise that you might be misdiagnosed. I learned more about BPD. I was part of the cliché. This was a diagnosis I understand. It made sense to me. My life was eliminated I had this clarity I never informed before. The criteria for borderline bipolar disorder is a pattern of instability of personal relationships, self-image, effects and beginning in early adulthood by five or more of the following -- one, frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment. 2, a pattern of unstable and interpersonal relationships characterized alternating between extremes and evaluation. 3. Identity disturbance an unattainable self-image or sense of self. 4. Impulsivity in two areas that are potentially self-damaging, for example, reckless sex,

eating disorder, reckless driving. 5. Recurrent suicidal behavior, threats or behavior, such as cutting, interfering with scars. 6. Instability due to mood. For example, in terms of an episodic dysphoria, irritability or anxiety, lasting a few hours and rarely more than a few days. 7, my favorite, chronic feelings of emptiness. 8. Inappropriate anger or difficulty controlling anger. For example, frequent displays of temper, anger, recurrent physical fights. And 9. Transient stress-related delusions or severe symptoms. It sounds like fun. Right?

Well, on my better days I try to view it as some kind of an adventure that seems like a moderately appropriate way to deal with it now, given my options. Other days it is torture. I'm dealing with the same symptoms I always had, but I have a better name for it now and track down literature or create my own, it is hard to find and navigate with a map, faded and torn it might be. The first question I have and the question I'm often asked, borderline between what and what? Borderline personality disorder was named in the 1930s. It originally referred to somebody who appeared to be on the borderline between neurotic and psychotic. Too neurotic, not psychotic enough to be psychotic. Views have changed since then, but the name persists. There have been other names proposed such as emotional regulation disorder and emotional intensity disorder.

On the topic of language I need to say because I have been diagnosed with BPD, doesn't mean I'm a borderline. If I have a cold, I do not become a cold. If I have cancer I do not become cancer. Be critical of language. Do not use oppressive language. Knowing what I have and the tricks my brain is playing on me doesn't make it easier. I wish I could fix everything. When I learned about BPD, I wanted to condense this information into a letter or zine and apologize to everyone I have harmed. I hurt a lot of people, I know, but they hurt me, too, but it would only be more painful to bring it up again. It is healthier to let it go and move on. I fucked up. I'm not going to anymore. There is no end to this story. I'm living it

every day. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Our third panelist is Dave Roche. I'll let him introduce himself.

>> Hello. I'm Dave, I do a couple of different zines. The one I'm here to talk about is On Subbing, About My Disappearance, Curse Journal. Three issues of it. One is good. It is about having Crohn's disease, like an autoimmune disease. It is attacking my intestines. I do a couple of other zines, too. I'll show you a couple of the times I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. I feel a little weird, because I have family here and I don't swear in front of my family, but there are swearwords in here, I apologize.

It is called self-portrait at 30. I shit myself three times over four days. Do you know what it does to your self-esteem? I couldn't eat more than a can of soup and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches a day. I dropped to 99 pounds after a month. I never had the energy and spent most of my day in bed. I never got more than three hours sleep in a row. I felt half asleep, not half dead. Every meal was followed by abdominal pains forcing me to curl up and bed until it subsided into a dull ache. My asshole was so tender that it hurt to cough. I developed a sore on my tongue and I could not eat or walk without pain. I hated myself for falling a part like this. I would lay awake at night. Whispering curses at my body and wish I would not wake up. One day I looked at myself naked in the mirror before I showered. Every rib visible, my stomach concave, skin around a skeleton, I wanted to cry. When you find your body repulsive. This is why I didn't return calls. I was so ashamed of myself I couldn't face anybody. I didn't feel like a person anymore. I didn't feel like a ghost. Ghost has romance, history. I had no history. And had sickness, shit, confusion, weakness and purposelessness. I didn't have a disease, I was a disease. I apologize to the people who are eating. You didn't ask for that.

That's it.

[Applause]

>> So, something I noticed while you were all reading is that all of you actually spoke about diagnosis, which is like coming out story of disease and illness and disability. I was wondering why you chose to write about the topic of your health or how you came about to write about this? Anyone want to take it first?

>> I'll go. I kind of started writing about mental health, because I didn't see anybody else writing about it. I started -- I guess, I sort of always, at least in some way have been writing about depression and anxiety and that kind of thing, but I didn't always have names for them.

I started writing about it more so after my first suicide attempt. I just gotten out of the hospital, I lost -- my, my home and my relationship at the same time. Had all these diagnosis, diagnoses to deal with. I feel like it is necessary for me to write about it, because it affects every single moment of my life. To not acknowledge it daily pretty much makes me feel like I'm lying.

I don't just write about mental health, I write about chronic pain as well. It is hard to write about, without sounding like my body hurts, you guys.

[Laughter]

But it feels like these are the things that affect every moment of my life it is crucial to be able to share it and just pretend I'm not scared to share it and do it anyway and hopefully, it encourages everybody else to do the same.

>> Thank you, Maranda. Dave, do you want to answer?

>> Sure.

I guess for me, I wrote about my health because I didn't know how to talk about it, kind of. Because I was, I was living in Portland when this happened, it was kind of around a lot of people saw me,

I put on shows at my house. Portland is small enough, if you go to the library, like the co-op, you get around people you know. When I got sick I disappeared. No one saw me for a while. So, I came back and I wanted to talk about it, but I didn't know how. I didn't want to be a weird thing on both sides. They knew I was gone and came back looking kind of different, But I didn't know how to approach the discussions. So, for me it was kind of difficult to gauge how much I should say. I think how much people wanted to hear.

I think also for like my friends, they wanted to know stuff, but they didn't know how to ask about it. It is uncomfortable for people to ask about the things, too. I felt like there was an impasse, I wanted to know, they wanted to know, but neither could get over the thing maybe it is too embarrassing.

I wrote to it explain this happened to me. My life is different now, I have a new set of concerns and things that I need. So, people can read it and understand it and be a bit more comfortable than a face-to-face conversation or read it when they felt they were ready for it. If I see you at a show and someone asks how are you doing? They don't want to hear, like really bad, I was pooping blood today. So, more of an accessible way to read about it when they are ready to read about it.

>> Thank you, Dave. How about you, Kerri?

>> I started I was a little bit more intent, I did a lot of zines before Deafula they were about run of the mill topics. Feminism, traveling, growing up, stuff like that. The 2010 Philly zine fest, I wanted to have a zine with me to trade with people. I was thinking about what I should write it about. I decided why not write about being deaf. To me it's like a really run of the mill topic. It is my every day life. It is not something that I really considered being interesting to other people, but I did it, it was supposed to be a one off, that is why number one doesn't have number one on it. I thought it was going to be a one time thing. I actually got positive feedback about it. People really liked reading about what it is like to be deaf.

So many people told me they liked it, I thought, I have a lot of shit to say about this. I decided to keep going it. I don't think that I'm going to run out of things. There is so much to say about how it influences every part of my life.

>> Thank you, Kerri. So, a common problem for anyone writing about a specific disease or disability they become a spokesperson for that disease or disability. Have you encountered this problem? If so, how do you address it? Kerri, do you want to take this first?

>> This is something that happens to me a lot. I think. I think -- it is human nature for people when a lot of people have never met a deaf person before and you meet a deaf person or read about what their experience is like. If that's your only exposure you have to it you think that what it is like for them. It can be kind of normal for people who don't have a lot of interaction with other deaf people to do that, but this is exactly what I don't want to happen. Because I don't want to be, I'm pretty much the only person, I think, in the zine community writing a zine about being deaf. I know one other girl who wrote a zine about it and stopped a little while ago. Of course, there is other people who write about being deaf, but in the zine community, if that is the only time you read it, it is easier for that spokesperson problem to happen, but I'm always really careful to reiterate over and over again what I talk about is just my experience and only stuff that happens to me. Because -- being the voice of the deaf community in the zine community is exactly what I don't want. My goal is to educate people about deafness and also breakdown barriers and talk about how deaf people are different and -- you know, educate people about the, the spectrum and it can be difficult, juggling that -- you know, how do I both educate people that all deaf people are different and then talk about my own personal experience at the same time. So, I struggle with the two of trying to meet both of my desires. When I was thinking about this, I was thinking about this essay I read about Toni Morrison who writes about memoir writing and a marginalized identity.

It can be difficult to write about your oppression for your oppressor, kind of it -- it can be a struggle to think of how to make it palatable for people who are reading it. Especially in the position to deviate your discrimination that you experience. So, I even do this when I'm writing my own zine. I will go back my first draft and think it is this too negative, if I'm going to alienate readers. This kind of thing. I worry about how much my own negative experiences are going to make them feel uncomfortable.

But the take away of the -- that you should pretty much shit and write about yourself. Because the thing that is missing about what other people write about marginalized identity is your personal voice, the stuff that happens to you. Your honest experience. So, even though I worry about people taking my personal experience and making it -- misrepresenting it and -- a spokesman thing or representative of the entire deaf community, of which I'm not, it is still my duty to write about the things that happen to me. So, my duty to write about the anger, to write about the pain, to write about the thing that we're shooting, that happened to it. I'm a member of a marginalized community. I want to share the story that happened to me about my marginalization.

>> Thank you, Kerri. That made me think about, specifically about zines compared to other published writing. I think that part of what you speak it is the close relationship that people feel when they are reading a zine. They feel like they know that person and own that story in a way. In a different way. I also thought a little bit about, how -- it is easier, related to this question, it is easy to think of a person as their disease.

Does anyone else have anything to say about being a spokesman?

>> Yeah. I was kind of thinking where I have this in my head, no. You cannot mistake me for someone who knows all of the things about this experience or this diagnosis because I don't. It is so different for each individual, but, at the same time, I'm kind of like -- I almost feel kind of obligated to tell

everybody as much as I can and be like this is what it's like. This is what it's like. It makes me think a lot about like, who I'm writing for or why I'm writing and trying to figure out, especially because I write so much about mental health, it's -- I've made some many friends through doing so, that it's like, I'm trying to determine if I'm writing for other crazy people. I use the word crazy as an identifier not as anything else. I try, I try to figure out like, sometimes I feel like I'm writing for other crazy people to find them and talk to them and make new friends. Sometimes I feel like I'm writing for sane people so they can kind of get a grasp on what the experience is. I can't decide if it is good that I'm writing towards sane people or be like fuck, I'm only writing for us.

[Laughter]

I don't know, I think, I feel like the reason that I write is to get other people to tell stories, however they can, not to just be like, hey.

I have this thing, I'm going to tell you all about it, this is what it's like for everyone because it is not at all.

>> I think that both of your answers speak to the zine community not being monologue -- and also disease and disability not being an issue where one story can be applicable to anyone.

Zines create a space for people to talk about their experience unique experience. Dave, do you have anything to say to this issue?

>> As a matter of fact I do.

[Laughter]

>> Please enlighten us.

[Laughter]

>> All right. I never had a situation where people think I'm a spokesperson for it, but people have

read this and the kind of issues I have more common. When I wrote this, I thought this would be the least relatable thing I wrote, but people have Crohn's or colitis or terrible hospital stories. So, I don't think that people necessarily look -- at what I have written or me as some sort of definitive of idea of what this is like, but a lot of people, they have gone through something similar. So, I think instead of seeing me as the expert, like this community, like, we get to share stories, like a friend of mine's mother had Crohn's disease. She never talked about it anybody, but I had it and she read the zine. She didn't come to me looking for the answers of what her mother went through, but wanted to ask questions and share her perspective of a daughter with Crohn's disease. So, I feel like I have been put in a position to ask a question, where I'm totally fine about it. Situations that arise from it. I never felt like people put up, oh, just being like, the very knowledgeable Crohn's or whatever. I'm sorry. Can I just quickly say before I move on. That the cart here -- is totally fine with the word shit, but if you drop an F-bomb It says bleep. Which is fucked. Sorry. I just -- I have been noticing. Like it censors -- oh. You understand.

>> Moving on. Does it make you anxious to write about your disability or disease? Or, um, is it easier to write about this than other parts of your life? Kerri you speak about how you have written other zines about other topics. How do you feel about writing this versus the other topics?

>> It is a little bit easier. There is some kind of ease that comes about writing something that you're intimately familiar with that other people aren't. It makes you feel like you have a little bit more of a grasp on it. So, less anxiety inducing, but it has a whole different set of anxieties that come with it. Like what am I sharing about my personal life, but what another deaf person thinks if they read that. How am I representing the deaf community? Am I doing a good job representing the deaf community? So, I have a deaf set of anxieties that goes with that.

>> How about you, Maranda, I feel like reading your work, a lot of your work infuses the issues that

you don't exactly separate other parts of your life from your identity and mental ill or crazy. Do you have anxiety?

>> I have anxiety about everything ever.

[Laughter]

>> That is part of your --

>> It is almost like --

[Laughter]

It is not -- it is not too scary to me anymore, because I feel like it is -- like it is what I do. Zine and writing are maybe like 90 --

[No audio]

Such a long time, but it would be really weird and uncomfortable not to. I used to be really freaked out. I was especially scared just to talk about, like -- I don't know, like talking about being suicidal or -- talking about being scared of everything. I, I used to be in therapy to learn how to walk outside of my house, because I couldn't leave the house. I wouldn't go on to the front porch to like check the mailbox. So, this therapist would like walk me around town. Now I just think it is funny and that happens. What ever. I just kind of feel like -- things are messed up. I would rather just share extremely personal stuff, that's what helps me keep it together. Or -- or be okay with not keeping it together. It is not scary anymore to me, but it used to be.

>> But it sounds like, I know me personally, I have written zines as a form of therapy. Would you say that writing zines has become a form of therapy for you?

>> Definitely, especially because I cannot afford therapy, but I can scan photocopies. It is extreme therapy for me. I don't think that I'm exaggerating when I say that if this isn't what I did. If I didn't find

zines I would 100% be dead.

>> Zines saved your life.

>> Yeah. Zines saved my life.

[Laughter]

>> How about you, Dave, are you anxious telling everyone about your diarrhea?

>> I had a good one today, actually, if anybody wants to --

[Laughter]

At work, I got paid for it. I teach 4th grade, by the way.

[Laughter]

Yeah. I was really anxious when I did the first issue. It was all really new for me. I wrote in my journal kind of a way to figure out for myself what was going on. Like I said, I didn't know how much was oversharing. I would never made this, I thought I would make five to ten copies and give them to people close to me. Like really close friends and probably wouldn't go beyond that. Because part of the -- disease, part of Crohn's is like diarrhea and stuff and generally people don't talk about it is hilarious, I mean embarrassing. So, yeah. When we first did it I was worried it was too gross. It was too immature. People would not want to hear about it. They want to see you and know that you are okay now, but luckily, the, the people really accepted really awesome. I felt like I had a lot of acceptance and people took it to heart and my close friends knew how better to support me. It was such an amazing reception. The next couple of issues I did. There was anxiety about it, but -- I felt, the anxiety I would have about putting anything personal out. So, I feel more comfortable talking about it now, than people validate it.

>> You have this like 14 part question here. How do you decide who to share your zines with? I think that it flows with what we're talking about now. Do you all, do you share with zines with everyone?

Your family. David said this is the first time he has read and sworn in front of his family. Do you, are their people you would not share your zine with?

>> Well, I definitely, I share my zine with people close to me, definitely. My family and close friends. I kind of feel, too, like once I was more and more comfortable with it and getting responses from people who had Crohn's, it helped them, with Crohn's, they want it put out more. I'm definitely one that says put out, you don't have control how people read it or react to it. I feel that is beyond, that's not my problem anymore. So, as far as people finding it by accident, there is no specific person I don't want to see it. I mean -- like people in this kind of mid level, like parents of some of my students it might be uncomfortable, but it would not be a horrible thing. So, I kind of feel like anybody can get something out of it, I would like to read it. It might be a little bit, period of uncomfortableness for both of us, but we can get over that. Yeah.

>> When I wrote about being diabetic it was actually more to give it to people, like okay. Sometimes when I'm low, I act irrational, I would like to address that. In some ways it was me being more accountable. Saying, like here is something that maybe we don't talk about, but that you know about me. Here's a way to open up and start talking about it. Maranda, you recently put your zine to a wider audience. Do you have issues with sharing it with people?

>> Um, I felt really conflicted about sharing it with my family. Because -- they, they knew what I wrote about, they knew that I wrote about like mental health. I would tell them that I write super personal stuff, but no one in my family, aside from my twin read what I had written. The first time anyone in my family read my writing was in Chicago Zine Fest a couple of years ago, because we road tripped together. They came to the reading. My mom and aunt cried and it was sweet and whatever. Now that I have a book they are proud of me and think I'm famous.

[Laughter]

It is really cute. The first person to order a copy of my book was my nana. She sent me cash in the mail and said this is this amount for your book. This amount for postage. This amount for tax and this amount just to keep for yourself, get yourself something. So, I mailed her my book. She began to read it, I heard through the family grapevine that she had to take a break. That is really understandable. To make things clear, my family is also crazy. It is not new to them that I'm depressed or hospitals and junk. It is probably new to them the styles that I write about it and the fact that I share it with everyone. The last time I hung out with them, my nana and papa told me that they read my book. My nana bought a bunch of copies to give to mental health staff at the local hospital where we have both been on the psych ward. It was sweet. She got me to sign them and stuff. It was cute. The reason I didn't share my zines with my family, not because I didn't want them to know, but I didn't want them to worry themselves into an early grave, because they will. Now they have this whole chunk, a decade of my life they didn't know about. I kind of forget to consider who I'm writing for. I kind of say, if you have a negative reaction, too bad for you.

>> It is more about you than me.

>> Yeah. Totally.

>> Kerri, you talk about writing your zine for a hearing audience and you're more concerned about how the deaf audience would perceive your writing. Do you want to speak for that?

>> I did-

>> I can't take it back --

>> Actually I felt more nervous about -- my deaf friends finding out about Deafula. I don't know why. I went to college at the University of Vermont. I was opened up to the deaf community and started

learning sign language. Philly doesn't have a lot of deaf people, I don't have friends there. My friends are in Washington, D.C. and Vermont and recently one of my deaf professors found out about Deafula because of the Chicago Zine Fest. I couldn't hide it anymore. He bought all of my zines. I was really nervous. All right. I was like, I really hoped that, like this thing sits well with you, I talk a lot about, like, community and, and where I fit in the community and it is hard for me, because, I -- am not fluent in ASL. I do speak English. I didn't grow up in the deaf community. So -- so, some deaf people feel weird about people like me identifying culturally as deaf. Um and I was afraid of them reading it and being like this bitch doesn't know what she is talking about. She is not one of us.

>> You can write your own zine. Right?

>> She was really receptive to it. She thought it was -- um, she thought it was really good. She thought I did a good job about writing my own personal experience. So, that made me feel a little bit easier about it.

>> Do you think you would encourage someone else from the deaf community to write?

>> So, yeah. Yeah. Everybody should write a zine. Yeah.

>> So, Kerri, in your issue, is it four? You talk about disclosing at work and how you navigated that. When I was reading it, it brought up the idea of disclosing as far as when we disclose things about ourselves personally, if we disclose a disease or, um, mental illness, that affects our outer life, outside of zines. Do any of you, has that stopped any of you from disclosing things? We have legal protections because of our health, so, how do you speak to the issue of disclosing?

>> I can't get away with people not knowing. Because -- like I have been on disability for six years. So it is like why don't you have a job? How are you paying your rent?. When I tell them I'm a writer. They are still, how do you pay your rent?

[Laughter]

I had a few situations where I felt uncomfortable and I also had broken fucked up relationships, where you are anxious, I cannot be near you. Lots and lots of relationships. But that is fine. I guess jobs is one thing, I worry, of course, one day maybe, but -- I don't know who I feel unsafe around about being crazy. I think, like I was talking earlier about how I felt unsafe when I had a bunch of my books delivered to my house, my landlord showed up, what is this. It is my book, what is it about. It is about being crazy. I totally blanked. I feel unsafe with somebody like that, I have more rights than them, but they have more power than me. Like he was asking about if he could buy the book and stuff. I was like, he could read this and hate me and get me out. I did get an eviction notice, but I think it was unrelated.

[Laughter]

>> I'm sorry.

>> No. No. Go on. I was just going -- wander on.

>> You said that you use your writing to connect to other people who may have, live with the same kind of experiences. Would you recommend writing a zine? Do you encourage other people to?

>> Always, always. I think the reason I made zines is not to keep just myself going, but encourage other people to express themselves. Not everyone wants to write, but I feel like everyone has a creative streak they need to do or something, they need to get it out of them. I write down my most like scariest stuff so everybody else will, too. Because I mean, I would be dead without it. Yeah. It is just like, it seems so weird to me not to make stuff like that.

[Laughter]

>> How about you, Dave, you talked about your zine. It opened up doors to talk about Crohn's with people that you might not have expected to talk about it. Would you encourage other people to write

about something like this? Do you know anyone inspired by your work?

>> Well, first question, I would definitely recommend it. It is like, I got to talk to a lot of people about it. And -- one of the things for me was like before I kind of had this out, when I was sick like this, a really big physical hold, my life is different, but I felt really alone, like none of my friends knew what was going on. I felt like no one knows this. There was self-pity and also you start to think like when you don't speak about the things you say these things are unspeakable and internalize stuff. Then hearing from other people is good. Knowing that other people don't have it and never talked about it. Finally, I never -- community might not be the exact right word, but having the people you can talk about with, but not talk about this and talk about something else. Which is the background knowledge that we have. We talk about taking a trip. Talking about taking a trip when someone is healthy, you don't have to make sure that there are bathrooms nearby. I can't take a-- you know, a long car trip. I have to make bathroom breaks. To go on a long trip I need my medicine with me, to be refrigerated. So, different things that are not like major, not things like -- things that I need to talk about, but being able to talk to someone who I don't need to explain these things to. Which is common, we have the shared experience is nice. So to get beyond that kind of stuff. As far as inspiring anybody to write about their health issues, I -- don't think I have. I mean I think people have read it -- I mean, I feel like I don't want to, I don't think I was the inspiration for it. They saw that it could -- I feel like I don't -- I feel like people have read this and felt more okay about writing about some of their issues, but I feel like I'm not going to take the credit for that. They would have done it on your own. Something would have sparked them. If you're going to write about it, you're going to write about it. What ever programs you doing it.

>> Do the rest of you have a similar experience? You don't feel like maybe you have inspired someone, but that's, that's, that, someone said to you, I read -- something that you wrote and it made me

think about something or write this piece -- a big way with -- we -- through zine, at least the kind of zines I write is through letters or, have any of you had follow-up about the issues that you have written about?

>> I have. I have never had someone who has, um, deaf write me and say that they wrote about a similar topic. I have had, um, people write to me, though and tell me that I inspired them to write about their own disability or health issues. Like chronic pain or other things like that. They were awesome. They were great. I think the funny thing is that it didn't matter what type of disability it was, they wrote about things that I identified with like so much. Like being worried about like -- um, like, you know, when to tell other people. Feeling guilty making your friends go through extra things. Having trouble with your relationships and having to influence your relationships. My boyfriend is probably like shut up.

Even though, like, all of us have kind of different, um, physical or health things that affect us, we kind of all have the same things that happened in our life, the same experiences. So, I feel like that is kind of like the community that I --

>> How about you, Maranda?

>> I definitely get letters and zines all of the time about, like -- I read this. So, I wrote this. I don't know if it's like me specifically that somehow makes people feel like they are allowed to talk about certain things that maybe they weren't able to before.

Um, yeah. I feel really weird about taking credit for that kind of thing, but people told me they wrote about this being crazy because they saw me do it and they could and maybe I should take a little bit of credit for that. I don't know, like it is so weird. But -- I feel -- I feel like-- if one person makes a zine and shares something, somebody else does and somebody else does, it is just like --

>> Yeah. I think that speaks to it not being, well, these are individual stories the zine community is a community and that while we're all sharing ideas in a way. Maranda, you mentioned in the piece that

you read language and identity. How do you all decide what language to use when talking about your disability or disease or the issues of accessibility?]

>> I have so many confusing, conflicting thoughts about language. I remember like when I was applying for disability. So, maybe like six years ago and not feeling like disabled was a word that I could apply to myself. It has taken me years and years and years to be like, actually maybe I can. To me it is not like -- I'm a person who is disabled. It is more like, I'm disabled by the world around me. That doesn't make space for me and doesn't -- get my experience or anything like that.

I always felt like a little bit funny about when people used different language, like -- differently-abled. Or disability with a slash through like this. And just being like. I like inventing few words and languages, but I don't think that I felt like that was necessary for me that particular word. I'm learning to embrace certain things. I think about the word crazy a lot.

Definitely I feel like a lot of people use the word crazy inappropriately when they mean any number of things. Ridiculous or angering or silly or busy or happy and stuff. Sometimes I get really uncomfortable with that, I feel like crazy is a word that has been used in oppressive and derogatory ways like the word crazy has a long, long history that most people are unaware of and a lot of people are usually critical about language and don't use oppressive language use crazy a lot. I don't understand why -- more emphasis is placed on not using one kind of oppressive language, but another kind is somehow okay. I use crazy as an identifier for myself. I don't use it for other people unless they have chosen to use it as well. Or unless I'm talking about like a crazy community. I generally don't use it as a descriptor because the sources -- exist.

>> Kerri in your reading last night you addressed this topic. Kerri read last night at women and children first and you talked about the identifying deaf versus hard-of-hearing. How do you choose which

word you use for yourself and your zine? You spoke a lot about the deaf community and how -- they may receive your zine. So how have you decided? How did you come --

>> It is really hard. I, when I was a kid my mom did use the term hearing-impaired. I did talk about myself that way. Deaf was like not a word we used in our household. It was like a dirty, weird other term. It wasn't until I went to college at UVM that I started to identify as culturally deaf and went from hearing-impaired to hard-of-hearing to deaf.

Now I always refer to myself as deaf, but even in my zine I still struggle with, in the deaf community, little d is deaf, like disabled. People who don't identify with the deaf community. Capital D deaf is capitalized if you identify with the deaf community. So, I'm always mindful if I'm using the lower d or the capital D. Also the word disability. I do refer to myself as disabled a couple of times in my zine. That is another thing that is really tricky for the deaf community. Many deaf people don't consider themselves disabled at all. Because disability is socially constructed. That is kind of a weird way to think of it. You think that is person is obviously disabled. But you try to explain it to people, think of near sightedness. Right? If we, there is like so many people wearing glasses in the audience. If all of you didn't have your glasses on you would be fucked and animals would be chasing after you, you would not be able to survive in the wild. However, our society does not deem that if you have a disability and we make it accessible. We formalize it. You are able to wear glasses. You are able to have insurance that pays for most of the glasses. It is not seen as weird. It is fashionable to wear glasses. It is fashion. So, deaf people look at it that way. The only reason that you think of this as a lack or something that is different about us, because you don't accommodate us. If you accommodated us, then we wouldn't be any different. We wouldn't be disabled.

So, but, on the other hand, I actually am okay with being called disabled. I don't know why. I think

about it a lot. I think I do think that I'm different from other people, but, I go back and forth kind of on it. Because I identify with the deaf way of looking at it, but I don't feel too weird when people say disabled. It is a struggle.

>> Thank you.

Dave, I think you might have a different issue with language. So, you -- you swear a lot in your zine. You talk about, you use words.

>> Not that much.

>> We were always talking about taboo subjects you talk about one of the most taboo bathroom issues. Have you -- did you -- make the decision to use the word shit versus a more clinical term.

>> Yeah. Mostly. I don't know -- it is kind of serious, it's like putting the word poop in there would make it seem like -- it would less in the affect of it. I'm sorry. I'm really immature about this.

>> I'm going to pass.

>> But I think just the words -- for poop, either are kind of like comical kid words or these clinical words like no one says feces. So if I put I have runny feces, what are you doing? People don't taking like that. So, I wanted to use words that have an impact and people actually use.

>> I think that applies to everything. Word with new definitions and challenging the old definition of words like Maranda is doing with the word crazy. I think we're going to open it up to the audience. Is there a microphone to pass around? One of my co-organizers? Anyone have any questions? Raise your hand. I think they are trying to get it working back there.

>> I have a question for you, Maranda. I also have borderline personality disorder. I have written zines about being committed. My therapist is kind of like maybe if you write about this, you are fixating. I don't feel like that, I disagree. Have you dealt with that, people are like if you focus on it, it is going to get

worse and it's like no this is everything forever.

>> Yeah. Their posts specifically I have therapists tell me I'm focusing too much on labels and the people tell me not to identify with someone like BPD because it is going to takeover my life. First I'm like, it already has. I always thought because it took me so long to get that diagnoses when I looked back it seems so obvious. If my doctors and therapists read my zines they would have known this immediately and especially like my last therapist, who have not seen since 2009, I stopped seeing her because whatever. She never gave me the diagnosis of BPD, but I felt like she knew it and must have known it, but didn't want to give me another label. That turned out to give me a problem, because that would have been really helpful a few years ago, but definitely I feel like people don't want me to focus on that's kind of identity. For me it has been life saving to take it on as an identity. I feel like you, with borderline personality disorder you know a way, hell better whether or not to take it on as an identity. How to take it on and what is good or bad for you. People give well-meaning advice like that, but it doesn't work for anyone. Everyone, everyone. Obviously it works for some people.

>> Are there any other questions right now out there?

>> Hi. I wondered if, um, I, I don't -- knows how to formulate this question, actually.

But -- I was kind of thinking about when you were talking if these conversations are happening, I don't want to ask for like advice from you, but to ask if you're like having conversations about the ways in which zine communities and zine spaces remain inaccessibility to different kind of disabilities and how like we as a community can think about throughout this weekend making our spaces more accessible and things we can do in the long-term to have those conversations. If that is something that you thought about or something that you might want to talk about a little bit.

>> Maranda, I know that you challenged over, their accessibility issues. Maybe you can start off

with this. Not to call you out on-stage in front of all of these people. Can you talk about your call out?

>> Yeah., I feel like 100% accessibility. Whether it is physical accessibility. Emotional accessibility is impossible. You will never, ever make any kind of space accessible to everyone. It's not going to happen.

With (Indiscernible), they, they are in extremely physically inaccessibility space. It is impossible to table there.

>> It is on the second floor, right?

>> Yeah. It is usually takes place on several floors and, um and, and the tables are very squished together. So, you're crawling over and under your tables if you have to pee. You're probably touching your neighbors. This would be like an extreme distance if we were tabling besides each other. People are walking behind you to move around. Some dude, it is always some dude walked behind me and while I was sitting here at my table, did not acknowledge me or say a thing, picked up my chair to move me out of his way.

[Laughter]

I've spoken with the organizers for years and years and years about making it accessible and various ways. They basically don't care. They have also chosen to miss gender me in cover stories on their magazines and website after I have explained why that is not okay. That is a very, very, very long story. I try not to associate with them anymore. Sorry. That is my phone ringing. I think it is my landlord, who I told not to phone me.

>> I'll answer it.

>> Tell him to fuck off, I'm busy. I don't know, I have really, really complicated feelings about disability. I feel if comes up a lot in zines and zine communities and we don't know what to do about it

and how to make spaces accessible.

I don't know, I'm too frustrated.

>> That's okay. I think that, you know, in zine communities, we have an openness to talk about, about these issues regardless of if we're doing it right or wrong. I think something you're talking about is like, I would like to talk to you or -- another -- zine fest or event about my accessibility needs or something I see as an issue. I think that's, that's something that is important.

>> I went to know that I don't know what it is, but somehow when I come to fairs they are more accessibility and more comfortable and interesting. My experiences with zine fests in Canada have been extremely negative. We even had e-mails from organizers of different zine fests saying accessibility is not our priority right now. Thanks for writing. We're not going to do anything about it.

>> In Canada?

>> Yeah.

>> Do you think it might be a cultural difference or no?

>> I have no idea. I guess it depends on politics and stuff. The organizers I know in the states are more like political, whatever that means. Whereas maybe the organizers in Canada have been more of like art students.

[Laughter]

Artistic.

>> Has anyone else, do you have -- does anyone else have a comment? We're in an arts school.

Keep it down.

>> I'm going to alienate everyone.

>> Does anyone have a comment about an accessibility issue at a zine event.

>> For me, for me, I'm bad about asking for stuff. I feel like a pain in the ass, but it is something that I need. I think the Chicago Zine Fest did the, one of the right things that is good to do is ask. If you know there is someone there who might need accommodation, ask what is the best thing for them. Then like I can tell you. Because not every person needs like the same time of accessibility. It is impossible to meet all needs. We can't have like a million different interpreters up here and whatever, but asking and then trying to meet the needs the best at you can. To me, it is, it is hard. It is.

>> How about you, Dave? Have you had issues with accessibility? Accessible bathrooms?

>> Not so much. I mean like with places like, like at Columbia, they are pretty, they have plenty of remembers and nice toilet paper. If you go, I have been on tours before. If you run into a shop, please, please, two-ply, keep it stocked. But generally, I just feel like it hasn't been too much for me, accessibility, I mean the things that I need, I can kind of take care of myself. Not that I -- it is -- as if, it is a different issue for me. I kind of make sure that I know what is going on with my body at the time. So, planning something months in advance, I don't know what my health might be look at the time.

>> Thanks. Does anyone else have any questions?

>> Hello? This kind of goes off of something Maranda had said a while back, but really any of you could answer this. Kind of opposite of accessibility, how do you deal with self-care and community care at zine fest, specifically. I know that you talked about how they can be anxiety driven and lots of people experience that. Do you have anything that you can share about that?

>> I just made a zine about that.

[Laughter]

>> It will be available tomorrow.

>> Yeah. It will be available for \$1 or -- zines about being crazy or gender queer.

[Laughter]

What I do -- I, I -- I'm extremely honest and tell people I'm an introvert, I will be overwhelmed and I lose my voice at zine fest. So, people, instead of tell them are they can read if. I take a lot of anxiety pills. Um, I run away to the bathroom and cut myself at zine fest sometimes. That's what I do. I don't know if that makes anyone uncomfortable. I would like to have healthier ways to deal with it. I let myself go crazy. I tell people that I'm crazy. I mean, I don't know how they could accommodate me in that. Definitely when I'm registering for zine fest, I usually tell them like I need space. I can't have people pushed up against me. I need to sit on the end of a row of tables so I'm not crawling over and under, because it is painful and uncomfortable. Yeah. I think a lot beforehand. I mostly just chug water and take anxiety pills and don't care if people, if I'm making people uncomfortable.

[Laughter]

>> I would say even as I identify as an extreme extroverted it can be overwhelming at zine fest with so many people. Also the personal nature of zines. You may have written. You write about very personal issues. It is like you meet someone for the first time, and they already know, you know, your inner most secrets.

>> Yep.

>> Or something that you might not share when you first meet someone. Does anyone else have anything to say about that question? Kerri.

>> For me the zine fests have been kind of good for me. They have, a lot of times when I meet a stranger, I'm like really against telling them I'm deaf. Because it is like, just in conversation I don't want to have. I don't want to explain that stuff. When they come up to the table and see that I write a zine called Deafula. It lets them know. I have gotten a lot better about being direct --

[No audio]

With people, but for me it takes a lot of mental energy to read the lips of somebody I don't know. So, it is really, really exhausting for me to do. So, I try not to give a shit about asking what a bunch of time. I will make somebody write stuff down. I will ask somebody to repeat what somebody else is saying. They are there to talk to me, they want to talk to me, I have to make the happen. It has made me be better letting them know what I need in order to communicate with them.

>> Dave, do you have anything to add?

>> No.

>> Okay. More questions out there?

>> I have a question for Dave. So, I was thinking about this when you were speaking before.

Most of my favorite foods are incredibly diarrhea inducing, but I like them anyway. So, I could not imagine my life if I could not have anything that I want. The question part now, how has that affected your diet? I don't mean like what you have to -- like eating your favorite foods?

>> For the most part, I'm kind of a baby about spicy food anyway. So, two drops of a spice enough for me. It depends. Right now I'm feeling good. I can indulge more and have fried tofu or something, that sounds delicious right now, doesn't it? But, I have to pay attention to. I'm not doing well, I'm on the edge, like, yeah. Just kind of stick with the steaming vegetables or stay away from anything too spicy or greasy. When I'm feeling better and there are also times for me when it is like my way of giving, I don't, I don't care, I'm going to eat this because I want to eat this, I will pay the consequences later. I want to do this right now.

>> That's great.

>> Hi there. My name is Maria. Thanks so much for this panel. I produce Albuquerque zine fest.

One of the things I'll inspired to do. This is a follow-up how we can do more. I have a friend who is a clinical psychologist, I have her just be at the zine fest for anybody that wants to talk. Not, people, I have taken, I have take then space to say, can I talk about this, I really need to talk as an organizer. I think that is helpful, too. I want to keep doing that and want to do more to create space to -- process anything that needs to be processed. We are talking about ourselves. There's, there's evidence of, of lives right there on the table. I think that kind of accessibility is important. Then in terms of food -- I have been trying to make sure that we have mild and vegan food available only. So that there is a sense of health and an interest in that, opposed to just grabbing anything. So, I'm hoping that those kind of ideas will be more prevalent, you know can, as we -- because not even everybody acknowledges what they need. You know? So, that's it. It was not a question. Just a supportive accessibility.

>> No that is really cool. I think that is really cool when people try to take it on to make the space accessible. Rather than making each person with an issue to come up and say it. It is so difficult, I think most of us here know how difficult it is to ask for what you need. I don't want to be noticed and it be placed on me saying I need this and this and this. I'm jealous you have a psychologist on that, that's amazing.

[Laughter]

That's amazing. Yeah. I have been to like some events where there are workshops and they have some kind of therapist on and a quiet separate space to go to, if you're dealing with stuff. That is so rare. That is so rare.

>> Yeah. I think that is what we did last year, we started doing a reading room to create a space. I have been into zines for ten years. Maranda in zines for ten years. Zine fast -- fests have gotten bigger and bigger. Chicago is one of the ones. There are few spaces to go and get quiet or what you need. It is

great to have a quiet space. More questions?

>> Hi. I hate talking into microphones. Just a quick side comment about, like if everybody who strives for accessibility in their communities, it will make these problems better. If anybody here doesn't know what ICARUS is, you should look at it, the same out of San Francisco looking at mental health and accessibility in different ways. I had a question for Dave, right? In discovering that you had Crohn's, was it like something that had been going on for a while? And you didn't know until it got worse? Does it go kind of like up-and-down?]

>> For me -- it, I had -- a little while, but, from -- talking to other people, it was pretty quick for me. The onset to diagnoses. It was like a month or two months. Started slow, my stomach was up set or wouldn't have an appetite and stuff that is easy to chalk up to like I ate, what ever, so, a lot of things I have, a million other possible reasons, but then like things went back ready quick -- yeah. That's when I started losing a pound a day for a while. So, so, that's when, luckily at the same time it is when I first got insurance. So, I was able to see doctors right away and get that kind of taken care of.

I had Crohn's for 8 years now about and, it kind of goes up and down. Like, like -- December was a really rough time for me. As, as my family can testify, I went, I was not doing well -- now I feel really, really good, but -- when it does kind of come on, it does come on pretty quick. Are there warning signs before? Like I said, warning signs can be like -- you know, the same results of like a -- a number of things.

>> I want to make a note. I know it was on the prompter. The project that you were talking about like -- flying too close to the sun. ICARUS project. There is a zine out there. I think they still active.

>> Yeah. You can find, I don't know if they are still active. I tried to contact them a couple of years ago when we started in Detroit. At that time I didn't hear back, but all of their literature is available on

their project ICARUS.org website. Including the radical mental health scene. It is a great -- concept, how we can be a better support system for each other.

>> The project actually like totally inspired me to write about mental health, too. That was one of the very few resources I could find that was not just about stuff written by doctors about how to not act crazy because you're making people uncomfortable.

[Laughter]

>> They really advocate, you know, taking that identify, that it is not like, like Kerri was talking about deafness being a construct, like craziness, normal mental health is only abnormal because we only define certain behaviors as normal. So, it is a great resource. Thanks for bringing that up. More questions? I saw one right here.

[Laughter]

We got time. Go right here.

>> I got time for two more questions.

[Laughter]

>> Hi. This question, I guess is maybe more for Maranda and Kerri, but -- if you have anything to add Dave. I'm going back to accessibilities at zine fests and how to make it better and more comfortable for everyone who is attending. I'm one of the organizers, my name is Erica, I'm an organizer of the Los Angeles zine fest. We did our second LA zine fest, I'm sure Chicago and everyone else who organizes a zine event you're always thinking about a million different things. But was just wondering if there was something really general of zine fest or zine related event where you think accessibility can be improved or more comfortable. Or make it easier. Something that you wish was there and didn't have to ask for.

>> Always physical space. So that other human beings aren't touching me.

[Laughter]

I think that loud music is kind of inappropriate at zine fest.

[Laughter]

Because I can't hear the people who are trying to talk to me. I'm not sure, I think just the general awareness of like -- I feel like people forget that it's, it's not okay to just -- touch somebody when you don't know them or -- I'm not sure. I think it is just good to keep in mind, that everybody is dealing with their own issue that you are totally unaware of. You just have to err on the side of caution and not make assumptions that every one is okay with the things that you're okay with.

>> As a deaf person, like interpreting for events like that, but thinking about the way that place is constructed to make it easier to communicate. Which is helpful for everything. I also agree with loud music. It makes my life a living hell. Please don't do it. Also having adequate lighting. Which is sometimes been a problem add other zine fests. Too dark or really, really bright lights that are in the center, they are shining, like behind people's heads and their faces are dark, I can't see them. That is hard, that happened at few zine fests. I know that you can't control where the lights are, but just to think about it, but thinking about ways to make it so you can hear. Everybody can see and it facilitates better communication.

>> To me access the food has always been important as a diabetic. So, yeah. More questions? I know there are more questions out there.

>> This question is for Dave. The disclaimer is. I'm not making any kind of suggestions or anything. Have you heard of fecal transplants?

>> Yeah. I have.

>> What are your thoughts on them?

>> It is grody?

[Laughter]

>> What?

>> Do we want to know what it is.

>> They take the feces out of a healthy person and put it into it colon of a person who has health problems. And -- it -- there was a guy who had MS, multiple sclerosis and -- was like borderline not functional and -- symptoms were gone in like weeks. It is kind of incredible. It is the future.

[Laughter]

>> Yeah. I feel like--

[Laughter]

Ah.

>> It actually inspired me to make a poop --

>> I'm sorry.

>> You made a poop zine.

>> I didn't do it yet. I was going to ask you tomorrow if you were interested in contributing.

>> Yeah. I have heard about that, but I feel like I have not given it too much thought, I don't know how serious it. The medicine I was taking now, I was symptom free for three years. This past 2012 was bad, because my insurance stopped paying for the medicine for a while. Totally awesome. First world problem hashtag, but they stopped paying for two months and I had to get it for free. The stuff I'm on now is good I'm. I'm embarrassed to admit this, when things are bad, I will do anything to feel better. In late December, I was back down to 95 pounds and scaring my family I looked terrible. It was any, anything that would make me feel better I would do. Actually, when I first got diagnosed, a couple of months

afterwards a friend sent me an article about how Viagra can help with Crohn's. I didn't know how to reply to the e-mail that he sent me. Other than --

>> You brought something up, does. We all talked about how your zines helped us communicate about our disability and diseases to other people. Are there other -- ah, positives that have come out of it?

>> Um, yeah. I feel like actually I wrote notes, because I can't communicate without notes. But I feel like, I mean, I already stated zines are the reason I'm alive. They are like the only reasons I even found friends. One of the major reason I started a zine because I didn't have friends. Now I do, but they are all far away.

[Laughter]

I feel like there is so much I wouldn't have learned if it was not for zines. It is where my critical thinking skill comes from. Obviously, I have gotten a lot of validation writing about stuff. It is how I learned to write at all and learn to be honest and vulnerable and be okay with that. Learn how to make good things happened in my life. I just thought of something about accessibility at zine fest. I'm going to take it back a little bit.

[Laughter]

>> Go ahead, it is all you.

>> This is another like U.S. versus Canadian thing. At Canada zine fest, they usually have alcohol available. I'm a recovery alcoholic. It makes me uncomfortable when someone is trying to talk to me across my table with zines, and they are going to spill it on my zines. I don't drink because it makes me really awful. I like that alcohol doesn't seem to be a priority at zine fest when I'm here. It is there.

>> Definitely say we have talked about a lot of the issues as organizers. This year the alcohol

issue, um, spaces, like you said, like Kerri mentioned, sometimes we have to deal with the space we get. That, it's something -- that is, I think, always evolving. Erica mentioned it with LA. There are things that people are always trying to do better. It's, it's-yeah.

>> But I feel like it is hard to make a decision on that. Like, what is your, like -- what --

>> What's your priority. The community good.

>> How are you going to make money that zine fest to do it again. It is just weird, I don't know. I don't like walking into a place, and they are like you're not allowed to have this. It makes me uncomfortable.

[Laughter]

I don't know and the other way, I think that like my when my variety was really rough and I had to drink to communicate with people. I understand that is a situation for people, too. Like having alcohol there is going to make them more comfortable. I don't know. It is just one of those things. It is just weird.

>> You were saying that -- to be, when you go to a zine fest, acknowledge that someone might not want to be touched or have different boundaries. Zine fest and zine community is a good place to learn those and take them to the world outside of zines for sure. Does anyone else, do you feel like there has been therapeutic effects to write about this? Or does it relieve some kind of tension. David said that he would do anything.

>> Definitely just writing it down was helpful. If I don't talk about something or process it in some way, I can't get past a certain level of it. If I can write it down or have a discussion, I can clear my mind of the first level and then take it to a deeper place. That sounds really new agey or something. I'm sorry.

But, what? So, like, just like, writing it in my diary, well, like a promise ring -- helped only one level. Ask sharing with people. Like zines to me, like ideally are the start of a dialogue, I'm not writing this to

check out my talent. Let's talk about these kinds of things. So, starting these dialogues having out there as a potential starting dialogue is a way for me to also process more about the impact my health has had on me emotionally and physically, whatever. So, yeah. So, no one read it I still would have gained from written it down and making it potentially readable to other people. Luckily -- I didn't have to find that out (phonetic).

>> For me the very best thing of doing my zine has been people who write to me who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and don't know any other deaf people. They write to me about how they feel stuck in between the hearing world and the deaf world. I identify with that so much. I feel such a sense of camaraderie with them and when they write to me and tell me that -- um, they have never seen someone write so honestly about the shit they experience in their every day lives. That is a good experience. If I can make one person feel less alone in this world, I feel really good.

>> This is not on my prompt sheet, but all of you have a limited Internet presence. So, why have you chosen to write about zines, rather than in a blog or something more traditional.

>> Have you ever read the comments on the Internet. I cannot handle that. I'm too fragile for that. No. I feel like. I'm not -- bad mouthing blogs. But the different forms of writing. They have different purposes and achieve different things. Like I need to like sit with it for a while and rewrite it and edit it a lot, but there is more immediacy on the Internet, it is not what I want. I mean, that's just my take on it. I don't know.

>> I didn't have the Internet when I started making zines. So, like we didn't have a computer at home or everything. I went to the library and used their computers by the hour. Um, I have -- like -- I hugely romanticize of holding something tangible in my hands that I really like written words on paper. I don't like staring at a screen, also using a computer makes my chronic pain really, really, really bad. I do

like, I do also write a lot of stuff on-line, like I have a blog where I write about mental health and zine stuff, that kind of thing, but zines themselves holding them in my hands it so makes more sense to me. I -- reading a letter and writing a letter is so much more satisfying than an e-mail, which I never respond to e-mails anyway. Because it just feels like such a chore. Where as writing a letter to me, that's part of my, like active process of creating friendships.

>> I, I feel the same way. I just really like doing zines. I just really like having it in writing in my hands. The Internet is bullshit, I will say, people say mean things on it. I just feel better doing it in a zine format.

>> I think we have time for one more question and then a wrap up. So, does anyone have, I see a hand raised very high up there. Okay.

>> It might be fast, because you were actually addressing this before. This one is mostly for Kerri. You talk a lot about being in between the deaf world and the hearing world and the burden of representation and how when your professor was like, yes. You were a good representative you felt a lot better. Are there other things in your life that kind of ease the anxiety of -- um, having -- like street credit as a deaf person?

>> Street cred -- deaf cred --

>> Yeah.

>> Um, that's a good question. It has been hard for me, because it has only really been recently that I felt comfortable talking about my zine to other deaf people. Um, the thing that I try to keep in the back of my mind is like this is a -- I'm, it is a -- personal zine. Like I'm not writing a zine, what is like to be deaf. I'm not writing the, this is the guide to deaf people. You know? So, like that's what I keep in the back of my mind, I reassure myself it is okay for me to tell my experience, because I'm writing about my

experience. If someone else has a problem with that, they can go fuck themselves.

>> Deafness according to Kerri. I think we have one last question.

>> Hi. So, I right in most situations it is completely am appropriate to ask people to educate you about their perceived differences or their actually differences, but I'm going to ask you to educate me right now. All of you. So, if there was one resource, particularly like a zine based resource that you relate to, that you wish everyone would read already, what would to be? I would read them if you tell me.

>> I haven't found it yet. It is why I keep writing.

[Laughter]

>> My zine? I don't know.

[Laughter]

>> Zine out of Portland, it's like about chronic pain, there was another one about illness. What is it called? Yes. That is amazing to think about illness and pain in general. Again, not a definitive thing, but a good resource.

>> We do have our books and zines available here during the panel. All of us would recommend our own writings a valuable resource.

[Laughter]

>> Thanks.

>> I would like to thank everyone. I would like to thank Kerri and Maranda and Dave for being so honest and open and sharing your time and experience with us.

>> I thank to the organizers for doing this.

>> Yeah.

>> We all really appreciate everyone's questions. As Maranda mentioned, the three panelists

have their work over there. Tomorrow they will be 200 plus exhibitors selling their zines and other self-published work in this building on this floor, the 8th floor. After this is the youth reading. What time is it? It is at 6 at 826 -- which is -- 1331 north Milwaukee. It is in Whicker Park, just west of Ashland. Immediately following is an exhibitor reading. I think some of you are reading. Right? Kerri is reading and Dave is reading.

>> Excellent people in the crowd. Raise your hand if you are reading. Anyone?

>> Jenna. I saw another hand. I'm sorry. I don't know your name. Okay. And that person.

Sorry.

[Laughter]

Anyway. Then afterwards, at Quimby's, which is -- just east of Daemon on north, um, yeah. The address is in the program. Neil, in our advance will be hosting charismatic zine lose or draw. I want to thank you for coming to the event. On behalf of the Chicago Zine Fest organizing crew, we really appreciate and thank all of you.

[Applause]

[Event concluded]

Ending time -- 3:40.

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