

Informed Consent Form

Title: Understanding Narratives of Queer Joy
Researcher(s): Sarah Gordon, Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland. s.gordon@mun.ca | (709) 864-8402

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “Understanding Narratives of Queer Joy.”

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Sarah Gordon, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:

My name is Sarah Gordon and I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Purpose of Study:

In the context of escalating anti-queer rhetoric and political shifts across North America, this study will document and analyze everyday experiences of queer joy as described in stories told by queer people. The purpose of this study is to better understand the unique experiences of happiness that queer life makes possible. To fill gaps left open by previous research, this study will focus particularly on queer joy experienced outside the contexts of sexual interaction or nightlife.

What You Will Do in this Study:

As a participant in this study you will take part in a semi-structured group interview between 30 and 90 minutes in length, including between two and twelve participants. The interview will be audio- or video-recorded. A semi-structured interview is one that has an established set of objectives but does not have a rigid questionnaire; instead it is flexible and allows the interview to follow paths of interest to the participant or the researcher. Semi-structured interviews usually feel more conversational than fully-structured interviews. In this interview, you will be asked to share one or more stories about your experiences of queer joy.

Groups participating in these interviews are self-selecting and should volunteer collectively. Examples of relevant groups include groups of friends, members of an arts or activist collective, families, sports teammates, or employees of the same business as long as none of the participants is in a supervisory position over any of the others.

If you would prefer to do an independent interview rather than a group interview, please notify Sarah Gordon (s.gordon@mun.ca) as this is also an option for this project.

Length of Time:

The interview will take 30-90 minutes. In the days or weeks after the interview, you may be contacted by a researcher to ask some follow up questions. Taking part in the interview does not require you to answer these follow-up questions.

Participants in group interviews may volunteer to do follow-up solo interviews if they think they have more to say on the topic than they could cover in the group interview. Please contact Sarah Gordon (s.gordon@mun.ca) to request a follow-up solo interview.

Withdrawal from the Study:

You may withdraw from the study at any time during or after your participation. If you withdraw, your contributions to the conversation will be deleted from the audio recording, along with all personally identifiable information. However, because you are participating in a group interview, some of your contributions to the group discussion may need to be retained in the transcription if removing them would cause other people's contributions to lose meaning; for example, if other people's contributions respond directly to your contribution. In the event that a contribution of yours cannot be removed from the transcription, it will not be attributed to you and will not be quoted directly in any research outcomes. If your contributions must be referenced in research outcomes in order to make sense of another group member's contributions, they will be paraphrased; such paraphrasing will be offset using square brackets and italicized text, and will retain only the components of your contribution that are necessary to make other people's contributions understandable; they will not include any personally identifiable information. Also, other participants' contributions will be redacted to remove any mention of a withdrawn participant's identifiable information.

Because the group interview is audio- and not video-recorded, it can sometimes be difficult to confirm which participant is speaking at any given time. Human error may cause some deletions to be missed for this reason.

During the interview: you may withdraw simply by verbally informing the interviewer that you wish to withdraw. Unless you specify that the interviewer may keep the material recorded prior to the withdrawal, your contributions will be deleted, though the limits outlined above will apply.

Participants who withdraw during the interview will be asked to depart the physical or virtual interview space for the remainder of the interview.

Up to 3 months after the interview: you may withdraw by contacting Dr. Sarah Gordon (s.gordon@mun.ca, 709-864-8401) and asking to withdraw. Your contributions will be deleted, though the limits outlined above will apply.

More than 3 months after the interview: You can withdraw permission for any future use of your data by contacting Dr. Sarah Gordon (s.gordon@mun.ca, 709-864-8401). However, at this stage, you cannot withdraw from any research publication that is already under scholarly review or has already been published. Also, at this stage, if your interview contribution has been used in publication or analysis, the researcher must retain a copy of your recorded interview contributions for five years under the MUN provision for integrity in scholarly research.

However, it would not be used for any further analysis or publication and would be deleted or paraphrased at the end of the requisite five years.

Possible Benefits:

Queer lives are often studied and understood in terms of suffering—dysphoria, loneliness, illness, social rejection. When studies have focused on happiness, that happiness has tended to be framed in terms of sexual pleasure or the joy that emerges from experiencing queer nightlife. These are both important forms of happiness, but they're not the only types of joy unique to queer life. This project will initiate a better understanding of other types of queer joy.

Possible Risks:

Given this project's focus on happiness, the potential risks to participation are low. You will not be asked or pressed to discuss any part of your life that cause you discomfort. Nonetheless, the possibility exists that the interview could cause distress by bringing up difficult memories or experiences. If you experience distress over the course of the interview, you are free to redirect the conversation, take a break, end the interview entirely, or withdraw from the study.

The physical, social, and financial risks of participating in this project are similar to the physical, social, and financial risks of living as an openly queer person in day-to-day life. Homophobia and transphobia can lead to social rejection, vulnerability to violence, and vulnerability to job loss and other forms of financial exploitation. To mitigate this risk, your name and any clearly-identifiable information about you will be anonymized unless you request otherwise.

If you require mental health support following participation in this project, please make use of the following 24-hour toll-free resources available in your location:

Newfoundland and Labrador: Call the Mental Health Crisis Line, 24 hr Toll Free — 1-888-737-4668.

Canada: Contact Wellness Together Canada by calling 1-866-585-0445 or texting WELLNESS to 741741.

USA: Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Hotline.

Confidentiality:

The ethical duty of confidentiality includes safeguarding participants' identities, personal information, and data from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. Only members of the research team responsible for conducting the interview, transcribing it, and anonymizing it will be aware of your identity and participation, and they will treat that information as confidential unless you waive that requirement. Although we will report direct quotations from the interview, participants and named groups will be given pseudonyms, and all identifying information such as your employer, hometown, the names of any other people you mention, etc., will be redacted unless you specify otherwise.

For group interviews, full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because everyone taking part in the interview will know the identity of everyone else taking part, especially since all group participants have prior knowledge of each other. The research team cannot guarantee that participants will maintain each other's confidentiality. Furthermore, if a particular group is recognizable to the public, for example as a family or a named arts collective, people who read the research may intuit the identities of individuals because they recognize the group depicted,

even if that group is not named in the research outcomes. This may be partially mitigated through anonymity (see Anonymity section below).

Data will be stored in encrypted, password-protected cloud storage.

Anonymity:

Anonymity refers to protecting participants' identifying characteristics, such as name or description of physical appearance.

There is a difference between anonymous *participation* and anonymous *data*. Anonymous participation in this project is not possible because you will be meeting face-to-face with a group and with your interviewer, so your interviewer and fellow group members will always know who you are.

Your data, however, will be anonymized prior to publication by replacing your name with a pseudonym and redacting any personally identifiable information unless you specify that you would like your name to remain attached to it. Named groups will also have their group name replaced by a pseudonym unless every participant agrees to the use of the group's real name. Individual participants may choose whether to be anonymized or not regardless of whether the group name is anonymized, but individuals who prefer anonymity should know that they may still be identifiable to those who know them, especially if other participants choose not to be anonymous.

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. You will not be identified in publications without your explicit permission.

Even if all members of a group choose to be anonymized, full anonymity may not always be guaranteed given the nature of this project. In the event that a person familiar to you, or to any events described in your story, reads the research output, they may recognize your contributions as coming from you.

Review of Transcript and Analysis:

After your interview, and before the data are included in the final report, you will be able to review the transcript of your interview, and to add, change, or delete information from your contributions to the transcripts as you see fit. The transcript will be sent to you by email. You will have three weeks to review the transcript and request changes.

You may request revisions to your own contributions however you see fit, with the caveat that a paraphrased version of your un-revised contribution may be retained if necessary to make other participants' contributions intelligible. You may request revisions of other participants' contributions only in the event that you feel their contribution violates your privacy. If, following the review of transcript, you wish to submit an addition or further response, you may submit that commentary in writing or request a follow-up solo interview by emailing s.gordon@mun.ca.

You will also have the opportunity to review the analysis to ensure your contributions have been represented fairly. You may suggest changes to other areas of analysis as well, but suggestions that are not connected to your specific contributions are not guaranteed to be accepted. Preliminary analysis will be sent to you via email attachment and you will have three weeks to review it, ask questions, and suggest changes.

For both of these reviews, if I do not hear from you at the end of three weeks, I will assume you are comfortable with the data as it is.

It is your responsibility to update me if your contact information changes and you wish to continue to receive advance copies of the analysis.

Recording of Data:

The interview will be recorded. If it is an in-person interview, it will be audio-recorded. If the interview is conducted virtually, then the recording will be done through the videoconferencing software and will therefore contain both audio and video; if you would prefer not to be video-recorded, you can cover or turn off your webcam. If you do not wish your participation to be anonymous, we may ask to take a photograph to pair with your data contribution.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:

All data will be stored in password-protected, encrypted cloud storage provided either by Dropbox or by Microsoft OneDrive. The data will only be accessible to your interviewer, the research team member who transcribes the interview, and the primary investigator; in most cases at least two of these roles will be filled by the same person.

At the end of the project, data may be archived at the MUN Folklore and Language Archive at Memorial University of Newfoundland or at the ArQuives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research. At the end of that five year period, your data will either continue to be retained or will be deleted according to your preference.

Third-Party Data Collection and/or Storage:

Data collected from you as part of your participation in this project will be hosted and/or stored electronically by Dropbox or Microsoft OneDrive and is subject to their privacy policies, and to any relevant laws of the country in which their servers are located. Similarly, data collected via video conference on Webex or Microsoft Teams is subject to their privacy policies, and sign-up and digital consent form data is subject to the Qualtrics privacy policy. Therefore, anonymity and confidentiality of data may not be guaranteed in the rare instance, for example, that government agencies obtain a court order compelling the provider to grant access to specific data stored on their servers. If you have questions or concerns about how your data will be collected or stored, please contact the researcher and/or visit the provider's website for more information before participating.

The privacy and security policy of the third-party hosting data collection and/or storing data can be found at:

Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/privacy>

Microsoft OneDrive: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/how-onedrive-safeguards-your-data-in-the-cloud-23c6ea94-3608-48d7-8bf0-80e142edd1e1>

Microsoft Teams: <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/teams-privacy>

Qualtrics: <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>

Webex: <https://trustportal.cisco.com/c/dam/r/ctp/docs/privacypolicy/collaboration/cisco-webex-meetings-privacy-data-sheet.pdf>

Reporting of Results:

Research outcomes may be published in peer-reviewed journals, conference presentations, books published on scholarly presses, or theses written by student researchers involved in the project. These publications may include direct quotations from your interview, anonymized according to your preference. Student theses are publicly available online via the MUN Queen Elizabeth II library thesis collection at <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses>.

You may contact the researcher at any time to gain an update on the research progress and outcomes.

Sharing of Results with Participants:

You will be sent copies of all research publications by email. In the event that your contact information changes, it is your responsibility to notify the researcher so that you can continue to receive copies of publications.

Once preliminary outcomes have been determined, the research team will also host a presentation over webconferencing software to present these findings to participants.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact:

Sarah Gordon | s.gordon@mun.ca | 709-864-8402
Department of Folklore
323 Prince Phillip Drive
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St John's, NL, A1B 3X8
Canada

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.

- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that point **will be deleted by the researcher, unless you indicate otherwise**, with the caveats outlined in the “withdrawal” section above.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw **after** data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to 3 months after the completion of the interview (with the caveats outlined in the “withdrawal” section above); your withdrawal date is ______. After that point, you may withdraw your data from future use, but may not withdraw from material that has already been submitted for publication or presentation.
- You confirm that none of the participants in your group holds power over you in your access to housing or income; in particular, none of the participants is your employer, supervisor, manager, or landlord.
- You confirm that you do not hold power over any of the participants in your group in their access to income or housing; in particular, none of the group participants is your employee, workplace subordinate, supervisee, or tenant.

I agree to be audio-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree to be video-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree to the use of direct quotations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I allow my name and other personally identifiable information to be used in any publications resulting from this study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I allow data collected from me to be archived in the MUN Folklore and Language Archives in St. John's, NL	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I allow data collected from me to be archived at the ArQuives in Toronto, ON	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I allow student researchers involved with this project to use this interview for classroom essays or thesis research, with the understanding that I will have the same right to advance review of transcripts and analysis for this student work as for any other research publication	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

- I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.
- I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.
- A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Participant's Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date