

SCANDA-LESS



BESTIE, DON'T BE TOXIC

**QUOKKA BOTTLES
BPA FREE**



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Gitta Sutisna

Gitta is a Breda University of Applied Sciences student studying creative business. Gitta enjoys making art, listening to music, and playing video games in her spare time. Gitta aspired to be a doctor when she was younger, primarily because her parents wanted her to. But she soon discovered that something artistic and creative suited her better. Gitta's fascination with digital art and technology began with her brother. *"He was constantly working on his computer, creating beautiful photographs and paintings. I was curious of him and wished I could do the same."* The band DPR, particularly the artist DPR Ian, has been a huge source of inspiration for her. Gitta learned that Ian is bipolar. Despite this, he is an artist who draws a lot of inspiration from his personal struggles. *"Sometimes the devils on our shoulders are the ideal breeding soil for fresh ideas."* Gitta has no concrete plans for the future, but she does know one thing for certain: *"I truly want to step away from the mainstream and offer something unique to the table!"*

Kristin Ting

Kristin Ting, a 19-year-old first-year Creative Business student at Breda university of applied science. Her background originates from Bulgaria as she is born and raised there but is half Chinese.

One of her biggest passions is dancing. She started her dance journey when she was 6 years old and has touched many different styles such as ballet, modern, hip hop, wacking and high heels. Developing her own skill is her focus now. Dancing always helps her feel better and she considers it as one of her core values. Kristin lives by succeeding in life, always be perfect and putting family on first place.

Kristin is a very open-minded person. She is not fond of judging and supports every cause and everyone there is, hence, why she likes the theme of Scanda-less. It unites her own values with this theme. *"It was a shock seeing people mis- and uninformed about various concepts."* Kristin is delighted to achieve our vision and hopes to help people to develop their own voice.

Jurian Willemen

Jurian is a 19-year-old first-year Creative Business student in Breda university of Applied Sciences. He has spent his entire life in Breda, the Netherlands, where he was born. In addition, he has Belgian ancestry.

Jurian has spent eight years as a member in a circus, which is one of the most intriguing aspects of his life. He began after receiving an offer to join from his neighbour, who was already a member there. He was first too afraid to do new things, but with time, he was even able to conquer his fear of heights. He has performed almost all tasks at the circus. From spring leaping while dressed as a kangaroo to juggling, one-wheeling, and walking on the ball.

Jurian has always had the desire to make the world a better place. He is deeply concerned about societal issues and thinks he can make a significant contribution. His goal for this magazine is solving society's problems. Even feminism, for instance, has always been an interesting subject for him at home. His mother has always urged him to treat women with respect.

Lindie Sterk

Lindie Sterk is eighteen years old and lives in Leerbreek. She is studying creative business at Breda university of applied sciences. She has chosen creative business because she likes to be creative, but she also wants some more certainty. Lindie also looked at an art school but that would not fit her because she would feel somewhat lost there. She knows what she likes and doesn't like. She doesn't like very practical jobs like being a nurse and is more into jobs like photography and art, but a more realistic version for her. Lindie loves to make this magazine because combines photos, so creativity and research altogether. The goal of making this magazine for Lindie is *"to make other people's voices heard and to create their own opinions."* Lindie is inspired by people who are working in the creative field and making it happen on their own without help. In the magazine, Lindie is responsible for the design, and articles. The designing fits well for Lindie, because she is very perfectionistic, and likes to put things together to make it work.

Jill Schep

Another author and designer of Scanda-Less is Jill Schep. Besides being a writer for this magazine, she is also the project manager of our team. Jill is 19 years old and lives in Groot-Ammers. Growing up in a small, religious, village, made her new to much information about the LGBTQ+ community, and she already learned a lot about it. *"I can improve my knowledge by making this magazine. And we want to convey the same message to the readers of the magazine."* This aligns with her goal for this magazine, which is to educate people to know more about several topics which are still an issue. *"We did an interview and they answered in such a way I would not have expected, and I learned a lot from it."* She wants to understand people's feelings better, as well as help the readers to do the same. Jill is a structured and organized person, especially in her (school)work. Surprisingly, though, she does not have a life goal: *"I just want to live day by day, and until now it's going great."*



SELF-LOVE HAS NO SIZE MEASUREMENTS

“You can be skinny and unhealthy, we all know that, so why are we only talking about fat people being unhealthy?” Sometimes body positivity is criticized because of normalizing being overweight and having obesity whilst ignoring the associated health concerns. But according to a 2019 study, body positivity aims to challenge societal standards of appearance. It promotes acceptance of all body shapes, sizes, genders, and skin tones. In this article, we discuss the controversial topic of body positivity with the specialist Jolanda Koutstaal and with a beauty and body positivity influencer Sylvia Mercera.

The Body Positivity Movement

Body positivity is a social movement that advocates for the acceptance of all bodies, regardless of shape, size, gender, skin tone or physical abilities. This movement challenges the unrealistic beauty ideals and standards that are prevalent in society. A lot of people don't know Body Positivity comes from the Fat Rights Movement of the 1960s. The National Association to aid Fat Americans (NAAFA) campaigned for equal rights for people of higher weight

and criticized the industry. They worked to improve life for the fat community through advocacy and education. The protests were against structural discrimination and biases. This was especially for the discrimination derived from the fashion and beauty industries that profited from making people and communities feel weak. Over time, this campaign has evolved into the body positivity movement. This movement began life as fat, queer, and Black women created their own movement after several mainstream fat activists excluded people of color. And in 2012, the third wave of the movement found its way to Instagram. Currently, it is incredibly popular, accounting for 13 million social media posts by 2020.

Body positivity is a very important movement because it questions beauty standards; Who actually decides what is beautiful and what is not? “Beauty, to me, means being yourself, and being comfortable being yourself,” Sylvia Mercera defined. Sylvia shows how she believes in body positivity to her 4,000 followers. Instagram used to be her job, but it is no longer her job in the same way. “At this moment in life, I feel like I

need to focus more on myself and my journey.” Instagram is still something Sylvia expresses herself through “It is still my work as people find me through Instagram, but I no longer want to be consumed by it.” A lot of attention is paid to the outside, while the inside is just as important. Some positive commercials promote this, for example, Hema and Dove, which feature models with different body types. “I think that beauty evolves, and it changes. Your definition of beauty changes. It's this ongoing process of getting to love yourself the way you are.”

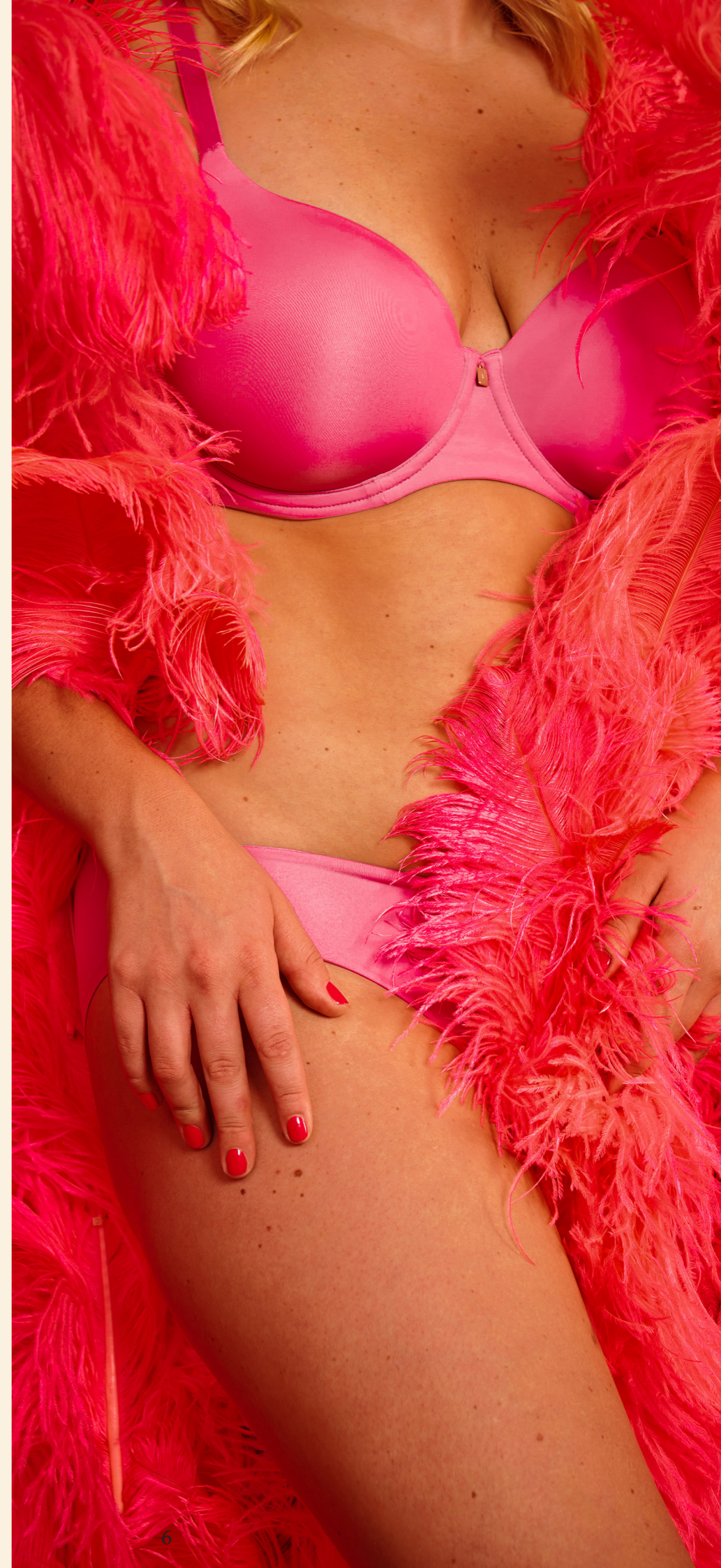
Self-Image Formed in Childhood

How you think about yourself can be about your body, social contacts, your intelligence, or about what you contribute to society. According to research by Meghan M. Gillen, individuals with greater positive body image reported less depression, higher self-esteem, fewer unhealthy dieting behaviors, and greater intentions to protect their skin from UV exposure and damage. Jolanda Koutstaal, who is an assistant of a general practitioner for mental health care, illustrates that if parents are obsessive about food and dieting, this

also affects the body image their children have of themselves. Or if you spend a lot of time on social media, and you look at ‘perfect’ people a lot, the algorithm will ensure that you get even more pictures of ‘perfect’ people. “Self-image is influenced by what you see and hear.” Sylvia experienced this as well: “There was not a lot of diversity where I grew up.” She grew up in a small town, and she feels like the close-mindedness of people living in a small village contributed to her not feeling confident in her body. “It was my family’s goal to always lose the most weight. I’m actually the first in my family that is changing the way we look at ourselves, and I feel like my mom is learning from me, and my sister is also learning from me.”

“Diversity, for me, means seeing yourself in your surroundings. Seeing yourself in the people around you.” Sylvia thinks diversity is different for everyone: “It just means all kinds of flavors of everything.” She sees a lot of changes in how women are portrayed in the film industry, but less so on social media. “We are kind of stuck in this system, where women have to be this kind of way. And I feel like women are all kinds of ways. I would like to see more diversity in women, and not just women, also non-binary people. Because we are all different, we are not the same. Not every woman is a mother, caring, loving, nurturing, and super feminine.”

Specialist Jolanda Koutstaal found out that different things affect your self-image: throughout your life, you gain experience from your parents, at school, and in sports,





something changed, I just started taking a lot of pictures of myself. To slowly develop a good self-image.” Sylvia Mercera posts photos that make her feel good in her body. “I use Instagram as a platform for self-love and body positivity.” She mentioned that this taught her to feel more confident and see herself in a more positive way.

Eating Disorders and Society

There are also disorders that are directly linked to someone’s body image. An example of such a disorder is Body Dysmorphic Disorder. This is a disturbance in the way one or more body parts are perceived. These body parts can be seen differently in appearance or even seen as disgusting by the person themselves, and they are obsessed with their appearance. This disorder often affects their social life as well. Body Dysmorphic Disorder can cause eating disorders, which is very persistent and require intensive treatment. People with an eating disorder can be treated in special eating clinics or with specialists in mental health care. However, sometimes people recover without the help of specialists, but this can make it even more difficult.

Sylvia also experienced problems with eating. “I did have an eating disorder, multiple. When I was a teenager, I started binge eating.” For her, binge eating looked like eating everything she wanted at that moment, “because I was either unhappy, or I was happy, or I was sad, or I was angry.” Finding a balance is the most difficult part. “Sometimes it is okay to just eat whatever you feel like. Why would you restrict yourself? That is also not healthy.” According to Sylvia, diet culture is something that is “disgusting” and has a very negative effect on people and society. Diet culture is a system of belief that prioritizes weight over well-being and it glorifies losing weight at all costs. “At like 28 or 29, I was so done with dieting and feeling shit about myself, so I dropped everything. I knew about diet culture, and I was like ‘no I’m just going to focus on me, and my health, and my mental health.’ And then, actually, I got more relaxed about how I looked physically because I was more stable mentally.” To her, the most important thing for her is that she tries to find a balance between what’s good for her and how her body responds to what she eats.

Last year, Sylvia realized how people connect body size to health, which can be very harmful.

She had several issues with her gut. “I had gallstones, which caused me to be scared of eating. I went from overeating to dieting, to being scared to eat.” She did not want to eat, to minimize the pain, as her body could not handle many sorts of food. “Then I lost a lot of weight, rapidly.” This caused people to comment on her body, without realizing what she was going through. “I was just really unhealthy. And then people around me were just complimenting me: ‘Ah you are losing so much weight, how do you do it? You look so good now!’ This was so hard for me, it is just so f*cked up to see how people are complimenting you on your weight loss, not knowing you are sick.” People only appear to see the outside, not the inside. “When I’m in a smaller body, I can feel better physically. But to me, how I feel mentally is more important than how my body feels.” She believes that “it’s not just about the weight.”

*“It is just so f*cked up to see how people are complimenting you on your weight loss, not knowing you are sick.”*

Triggers Regarding Eating Disorders

Even after healing from eating disorders, triggers can still affect how they feel in their body. Triggers are sensory reminders that cause certain symptoms or traumatic memories to reappear. It’s a stimulus that causes a painful memory to resurface or anything that activates or heightens the symptoms of a mental health condition. “There can be so many people that influence or trigger you in different ways. I noticed I was triggered by people that were always consumed by exercise and what they eat.” Sylvia then started asking herself “why am I triggered?” and “why do I want to keep consuming that?” She then started unfollowing the social media accounts that triggered her. “The way I am now I can easily consume these things. (...) But sometimes you just need to protect yourself.” It also helps to surround yourself with people that are like-minded, to decrease the possible triggers in daily life.

Another trigger may be social media influencers who heavily edit their images. This creates an unrealistic beauty standard. “I think the younger audience is really sensitive to these kinds of

alterations.” This beauty standard can be seen as a vicious cycle, as it creates pressure to post visibly ‘perfect’ images. This can cause other social media influencers to edit their images as well. Sylvia also edited her images when she started posting on Instagram. “I used to edit my makeup, shadows, highlights, and skin, to not have visible pores and to create smooth and even skin. (...) I also had a setting on my phone that made my chin look smaller.” Currently, she rarely edits her photos. “I think there was a moment where I was really confronting myself with doing that and becoming aware of why. (...) Why do I do that, why do I want to look different? Am I afraid of what others may think of me? Is it to make myself feel better?”

#BodyPositivity

Although the body positivity movement aims to help people, according to medical advisor Bethany Juby, it has not achieved its intention of promoting inclusivity. Research indicates that most Instagram posts that use the hashtags of the movement, such as #bodypositivity, feature young, white, ‘skinny’, non-disabled females, whilst the main purpose of body positivity was to radiate inclusivity. “I don’t think you can call

“I don’t think you can call it body positivity if it comes from skinny white women,”

it body positivity if it comes from skinny white women,” Sylvia said. The body positivity movement comes from a place where black women in the 50s and 60s were protesting. “They died while being active on the street, fighting for our liberation to be fat.” They were fighting against discrimination against how they were being portrayed, as fat black women were always referred to as lazy and disgusting. “I do however think that it is also very important to spread the message through everyone. But you shouldn’t claim the title of a body-positive activist if you’re a skinny white woman. Call it self-love, self-acceptance, call it body acceptance, or body neutrality, which is something we use as well.” The intention behind doing it is good, “but let’s leave it at the people who really fought for it.”

She stresses that for many people they might look at exercises on self-love and think that it is



a good idea, but they do not do anything with it. “Do you actually do it, or do you just read it and think ‘oh that’s good’ and just continue to do whatever you do? Do you practice it, do you really do the work? That is very different online versus real life, because I feel like a lot of people are scared to really do it and really love themselves.” Nothing will happen or change in the way you feel about your body if you do not actively work on it. “When you actually do it, you will program yourself into thinking ‘this is the new normal.’”

Inclusive Re-make of a Linda Cover

The September 2022 edition of Linda was all about breasts, including a cover with famous women posing topless. “The intention was to normalize the female breast”, editor-in-chief Karin Swerink said. But critics felt the selection of women was not representative and inclusive enough. Therefore, feminist platforms, Damn, Honey and FMNST, made a re-cover, showcasing more diverse models. Sylvia was not only the make-up artist for the photo shoot, but she is also on that cover as a model. “It was actually the first time I made the news. It was really big.” Because the re-cover made the news, they also got a lot of opinionated comments on it. “I’m happy it blew up, but we also got confronted with a lot of hate. (...) That’s the thing that happens when you create something like that, with controversy, you get positive reactions, but you also get very negative reactions and a lot of hate.”

Future view and piece of advice

Because of difficulties in how comfortable people feel in their bodies and mentally, the need to change your appearance can be very prevalent in your daily life. This can change constantly. Your clothing, and the colors that you wear, can tell a lot about you and how you want to be perceived. “You have to experience it daily.” For Sylvia, “make-up can be a tool for when you feel down.” However, currently, rather than trying to change her appearance, she thinks “it’s more important to get acceptance.”



“I think it is important to show to the next generations that you can be happy no matter what you look like, or what size you are.” Body positivity is about the acceptance of all types of bodies. It is derived from the fat rights movement of the 1960s. In those days, body positivity wasn’t about people with regular weight. Nowadays, body positivity is shown in all types of bodies, and not only in bodies classified as fat. In the end, there is no specific classification for ‘fat’ or ‘skinny’, and let’s make body positivity what it means nowadays. “Yes, it [being fat] can com-

promise some people’s health, but it shouldn’t have to be the fixation of everything. Don’t judge too easily. It can have so many reasons why people are skinny or fatter.” Let everyone be free to show what they feel good about, this way there are also fewer insecurities created by all the ‘perfect’ pictures on social media. “Be real, be honest. I feel like we need to be honest to the younger people, so they don’t feel like it needs to click one day to just feel body positive.”

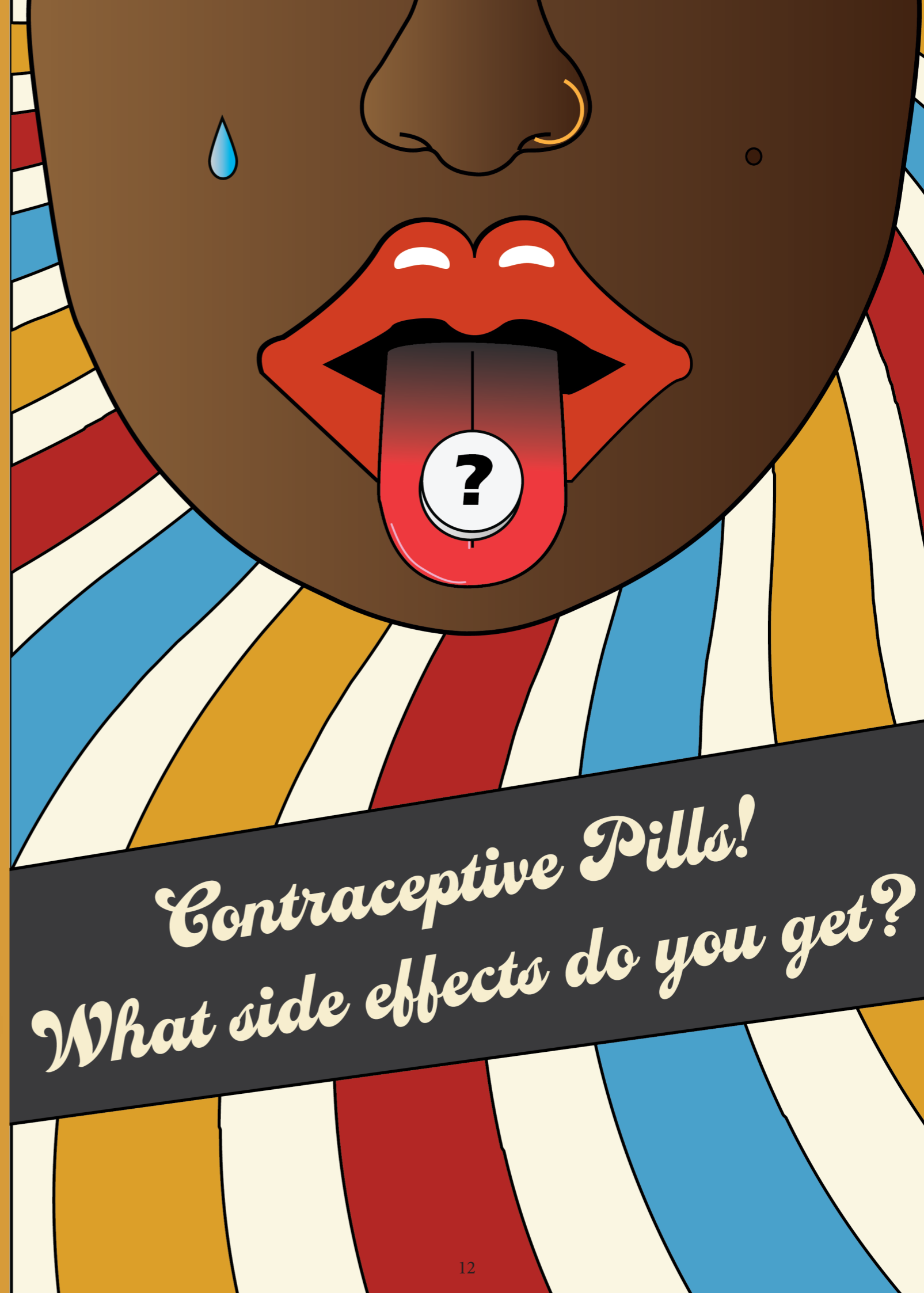


Let's get naughty

Let's get naughty

Let's get naughty

Let's get naughty



*Contraceptive Pills!
What side effects do you get?*

FREE THE NIPPLE!

Aidan is holding Tony's hand like their life is on the line. They're walking towards the cleaner's staff room. Aidan opens the door abruptly and checks if someone is there. Silence. The two sophomores go inside. Tony is worried. He looks at Aidan with nothing but concern: "What's up Aidan? Why have you been acting so strange the past few days? You just appeared with those bandages around your arms the other day with no explanation. Did someone hurt you?" Aidan is shivering. He never thought that it would be so difficult to talk with his best friend. Immediate concern troubled his mind. What if Tony never speaks to him again? He took a deep breath: "Look, Tony, I brought you here to tell you something crucially important. I am sorry I have been so distant those days but something happened and I have been extremely frightened to tell anyone. I cannot even go to a doctor because they will probably think I am an alien and do experiments on me for the rest of my life!"

Aidan can already feel Tony's soft gaze. They have always been there for each other. "You know you can talk to me about anything. Whatever it is, we will fix it together, don't panic." – states Tony in a calm, silvery voice. Aidan loosens up: "Thank you, Tony. You are my best friend, I cannot hide anything from you."

"It's always us against the world." – Tony smiles

Aidan takes a deep breath. His whole body is trembling but he cannot hold it back any longer: "The truth is, I have some nipple disease. I do not know what it is exactly. It doesn't hurt but if people see it-

"What? Nipples? Do you mean like breast nip-

ples?" – interrupts Tony. Aidan is agitated to even continue: "Yes, breast nipples...!". He starts touching his body with disgust. The thought of him being in his own skin makes him want to puke: "I just woke up one day and I had some nipples on my legs but they kept spreading throughout my body with every passing day. They got to my arms and now, pretty much my whole body has them.". Tony looks pale. He tilts his head to the side and his expression changes. He looks puzzled: "Even...down there?". Aidan's face is now red, worse than a tomato: "EVEN DOWN THERE".

He takes some bandages off his arms and shows it to Tony. Tony could sense that those bandages have not been taken off in at least six days. The smell of old, sweaty textile made him quiver.

The bandage is now on the ground. Tony is frozen. He does not know how to react. Aidan's skin is covered with nipples. Breast nipples.

"What?! How is this even possible? It must be because of that sick b*tch you made fun of the other day!" – Tony is bewildered. It's like he saw a ghost.

Aidan is worried. He needs to fix this: "I think she cursed me because I said stuff about her nipples. But I don't know how to reverse it and I do not –". The door opens and a teen couple comes in without noticing the two sophomore boys.

"Come on! Let's make out here for a while! No one is going to find us!"

"Okay but we have to be very quiet!"

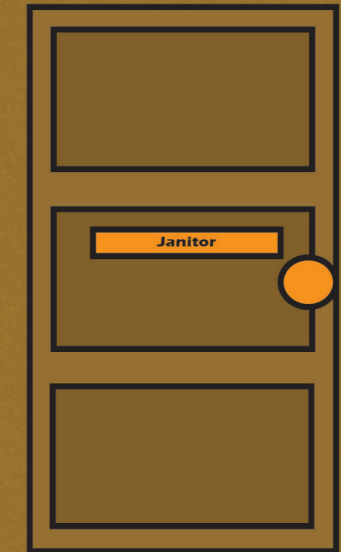
Silence. They notice the two boys. The girl makes eye contact with Aidan but her vision immediately shifts to his arm. She screams in fear: "WHAT DO YOU HAVE ON YOUR ARM?!"

The boy pulls his girlfriend to the side: "You are not going to believe this. That is Aidan. He is the baseball team leader." He clasped the girl's hand and pulled her towards the door with his whole body weight: "Come on, let's get out of here". Aidan panics: "Nooooo, wait! I can explain!" But the couple already left.

The world stops. Aidan tries to comprehend what just happened but he can only feel the cold, rough ground he fell on. His legs weren't holding him standing anymore: "This is the end. They are going to tell everyone about me!" Tears start falling down Aidan's face. He can taste his salty, bitter fear: "The whole school is going to know about this! I cannot go out of this room anymore. Everyone will see my nipples!"

Tony utters: "Aidan, I know you are in a stressed state right now, but I need you to calm down. Try to match your breathing with mine or else you are going to have a panic attack." Aidan takes a couple of deep breaths. Tony is holding his hand firmly: "Aidan, everything is going to be okay. I'm very sorry this happened to you. I do have to ask though – **Is people seeing your nipples a good thing or a bad thing?** Why would people react bad when seeing them? In my opinion, both men's and women's nipples are beautiful. Especially, for women – why would they want to hide them? I don't think YOU should hide them. You basically made them look disgusting by torturing them in those bandages. Are you really ashamed to show something everyone has? **FREE THOSE NIPPLES!**"

We can do it!
Free Those
nipples!



"IT'S JUST HAIR, WHO CARES?"

We sat down with Jayden, a 19-year-old student who is a second year Creative Business student at Breda university of Applied Science. Jayden started their transitioning story when they were 13 and a half years old when they began to identify as gender neutral. As of lately, Jayden started to go on testosterone last year and has experienced many changes in their body. One of those being their body hair. But how has Jayden felt about their body hair before and after transitioning?

"How did your transitioning story exactly start?"

"When I was 13 and a half, I had a friend that identified as gender fluid and as pan sexual. At the time I was convinced I was cis and straight, but my friend thought differently. My friend being gender fluid made me want to know more about that topic. I learned more about it and then realized, fuck, that is me! So, it was mostly because of exposure. I have been identifying myself as gender fluid since I was 13 and a half. I started

using my preferred name and they/them pronouns regularly by the time I was almost 15. up till now, I was Jayden."

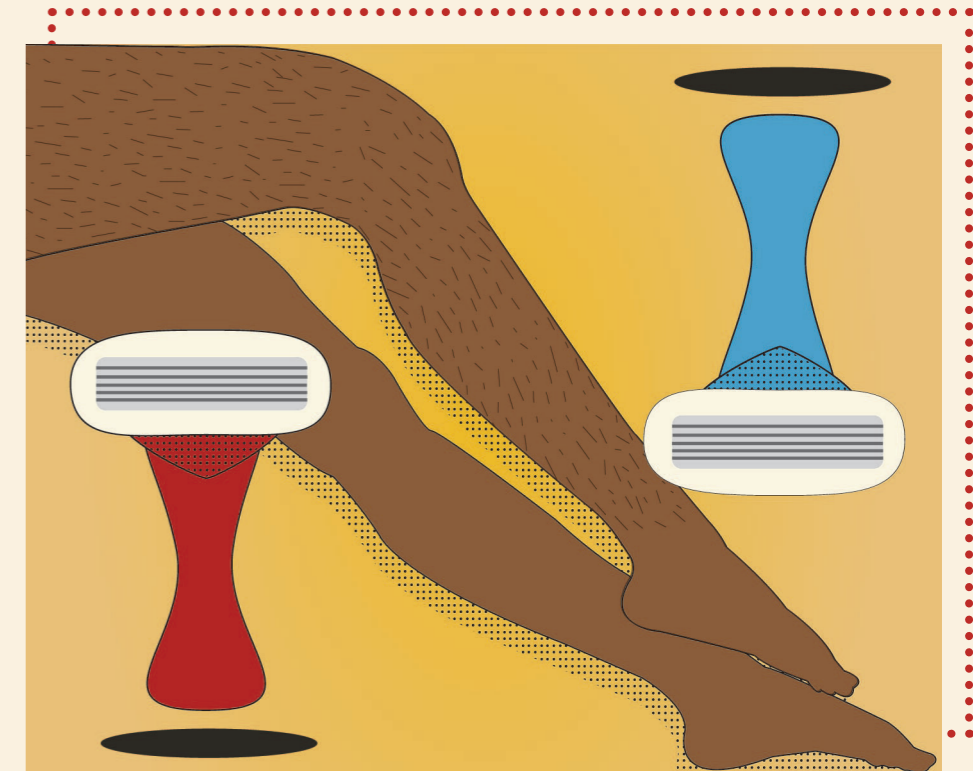
"My journey with testosterone is one I did it through a loophole. I know here in the Netherlands the transition process takes forever. The waiting list is horribly long. In the beginning of august last year, I had my consultation in the US and that same day they wrote a prescription for me. I could easily pick it up at the pharmacy. Since I have insurance here; I can get it each time I need a new bottle. Basically, I am cheating the system! Officially I started august 3rd of last year, 2021."

"How did testosterone contribute to your view of your own body hair? And what do you prefer to do with your body hair?"

"I knew that I was going to get increased growth, everywhere, and it is horrible. I mean, you do get used to it. When you go on testosterone as an assigned female at birth person it unleashes the cages. Generally, the hair got thicker, darker and a little courser and there are just more follicles. Next to

that I developed the male hair growth pattern for my genetics which can also bring in male pattern baldness! My hairline has slightly gone back on the sides of my head. But when it comes to hair growth it did continue pretty much everywhere else. It took me a little bit of time to break down that barrier of how I grew up to how I want to be perceived myself. I was always used to shaving my legs and my arms too sometimes. But eventually, I just didn't care anymore. I do try to have a more masculine appearance for myself, so now I do grow it out. I'm not too bothered by it. It can only grow so long until it stops. However, I have not tried shaving to see the full potential yet. I am kind of scared for that. It has been a very long time since I last shaved."

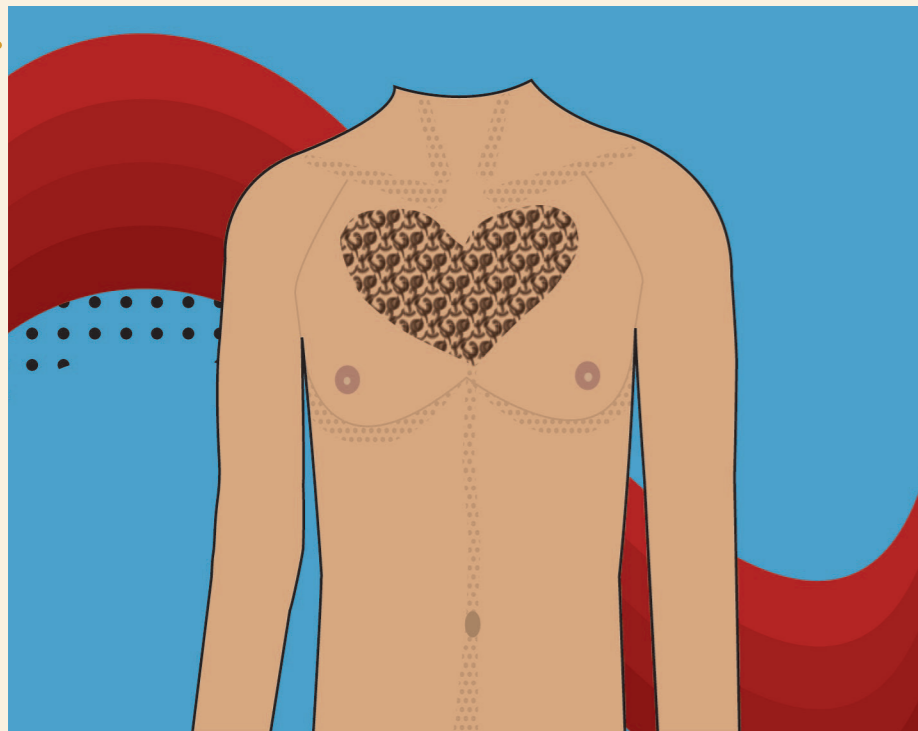
"It is very nice to see that someone is very neutral about body hair and just doesn't care about it! However, there is societal standard about body hair that seems to be stuck in a lot of people their minds. What are your thoughts about this standard in society?"



"To me the societal standard is, for the lack of a better word, bullshit. No one should be needed to do anything to express their own gender identity. So, fuck it! if a man wants to shave his legs, Slay! and if a very cis woman wants to grow hers out, fucking do it! That goes for any part of their body if they wanted to. Of course, there are people that do care for the societal standard but ultimately it is more about how I want to be perceived by society. I just personally hold myself to that gendered standard. This is more of that masculine appearance because that is what is expected by society based on the standards. I keep myself to that type of perception from society but when I look at other people I really do not care. Do your own thing, whatever."

"Do you perhaps have an end goal with your transitioning?"

"For now, I do not know. For the rest of my transition, I certainly want to get top surgery. Nowadays I just wear a binder, but it is so fucking annoying! My journey with testosterone is undoubtedly not done yet. Especially when it comes to my voice. It has gradually deepened but it does still crack so that is how I know it is still deepening. Bone structure is also a thing! My shoulders have gotten a little broader and my jaw is more defined, plus a little wider. My face used to be round and now it is slightly more squarish. Very fun! When it feels right, I can stop otherwise I'll just continue my journey."



I AM A HUMAN

I'm a Human

"It felt correct when I started experimenting with wearing a feminine shirt." This is Katelin. They are a non-binary trans person from Tilburg. However, they think it's important to stress being a human rather than a label. *"I don't really care about how people refer to me."* Their passions are theater, music and games. This relates to their study, as Katelin is cur-



those of others. Katelin went to a therapist specialized in gender studies, who helped them by talking about gender and experimenting with gender. *"It felt correct when I started experimenting with wearing a feminine shirt."* They mentioned that in



this period, there were some sleepless nights, *"with looking up information, because I found this thing, in all the hectic of life, which I felt connected to."* Katelin had a difficult time placing why they felt connected to the LGBTQ+ community, as they were not sure in what way they fit into the community. **They did not see themselves as a woman, "but it fits me more than what I'm being told I am right now."** A part of this struggle was because they did not grow up with many queer people, and it wasn't talked about much. Later, it turned out that many of their friends were LGBTQ+, but **they did not talk about it, which made it seem like it was not a normal thing.** However, Katelin realized that *"it is normal, but it's not normalized."*

rently studying Games at Breda University of Applied Sciences. Their goal and drive in life is to make others happy.

Normal But Not Normalized

Katelin never felt the most normal, or at least not *"what other people think is normal."* For the longest time they didn't think about how they were 'different' and did not realize that they were transgender. This changed when they were about 16 years old, as they started thinking about how their thoughts and feelings were different to

Coming Out

"Very scary." This was the first thing that came to mind when asking Katelin about their experience coming out to family. Before coming out to their family and their close friends, they tried coming out to a friend who they met on vacation. This felt like a safe option as this friend lived far away. In the next step of their coming out, they came out to other



friends and to a therapist. Even though their family is generally acceptive and loving, coming out to family was truly scary according to Katelin. *"Super scary, like super scary (...) super scary."* However, after coming out, they concluded: *"My coming out went as smooth as it could."* The parents had a 'normal' reaction, with them questioning if Katelin was certain about it and them being shocked. They were never trying to prevent them from transitioning and trying to be themselves. Rather they were scared for Katelin, as a queer

person in this world. When they realized that the parents were just protective, Katelin stated: *"That realization helped me get past the times that they misgendered or used my dead-name. It helps you get past this if you know it's from a place of love."*



Rock Bottom

About five years ago, when Katelin started taking testosterone blockers and estrogen, they felt more emotionally unstable. In this period, they heard that some of their friends were suicidal. This was a very hard and scary thing, thinking about the fact that they could lose these friends. Shortly after, Katelin went on a camping trip with other friends. On this trip, the emotional change became prevalent, which resulted in conflicts with their friends. *"It was half a year after taking hormones, and a few months after that, my friends let me down."* This resulted in a depressive period, where they hit rock bottom. *"I did not want to end myself, but*

I did want to stop existing." The cause of this was that Katelin was not able to deal with their emotions. Katelin went to a therapist where they started giving grades to feelings. This helped them get out of this dark place and help them to be happy again.

Expressing Themselves

Nowadays Katelin feels good in their body and feels that they are in a safe space, surrounded



by supportive people. When we asked Katlin how they express themselves, they gave an interesting answer: *"When you see something and you think of me, then that's me expressing myself."* Specifically, Katelin found a passion in playing card games. Furthermore, Katelin feels confident in their identity and knows who they are, regardless of how people respond to them. *"I know who I am, so they don't have to validate who I am."*

Call to Action

Katelin feels like labelling people is still a big thing nowadays, and they don't think it should be like this. To them, gender is a spectrum and not a complete binary. They hate gender stereotypes and how



people discredit someone's worldview because of gender. *"To me, gender always gets in the way."* Katelin wants to stimulate everyone to be more open to talk about the LGBTQIA + community. And instead of classifying people into groups and putting people in boxes, *"start calling everyone human instead."*

Spread Positive Vibes

