

Second Annual



CHICAGO NON-MONOGRAMY CONFERENCE



The Chicago Non-Monogamy Conference

Welcome to the second Chicago Non-Monogamy Conference!

The first Chicago Non-Monogamy Conference (CNMC) was a sell-out success in 2017. Here we are, a year later, back for more community building!

The goal of the CNMC is to help bring the Chicago non-monogamy community together across all the lines that divide us - age, gender, race, class, location, ability, configuration, label, and all of the other categories which house us. On one hand, this one-day conference provides a space for attendees to discuss topics pertinent to being non-monogamous, to expand their understandings of their own relationships, and to get to know each other as members of a diverse community. In this capacity, today's conference is about attendees meeting new people and learning new things.

On the other hand, the CNMC is devoted to seeking intersectional understanding and inclusion, and this means undermining those systems which separate us. The CNMC firmly believes that the personal is political. As such, in order to have positive and holistic relationships, we must be accountable not only to ourselves, but to our families and partners, to each other, and to our wider communities. In this capacity, the CNMC is dedicated to creating a world in which ethical non-monogamy is not only inclusive, but welcoming and understanding; not only included, but understood and welcomed. This inclusion begins here - at the conference, in our homes, in our partnerships, in our communities - and the CNMC is actively working to provide safe spaces and to give voice to marginalized peoples within the non-monogamy community so that we are helping to create the world we want.

Thank you for attending and helping to make our 2nd annual conference a success!

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There would be no conference without the help and support of the following sponsors and partners:

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Aericka Helf

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Fundraiser Beneficiary



The proceeds from our fundraiser will go to benefit Brave Space Alliance.

Brave Space Alliance is the first Black-led, trans-led LGBTQ Center located on the South Side of Chicago, and designed to create and provide affirming and culturally competent services for the entire LGBTQ community of Chicago. We aim to generate opportunities for ourselves, our families, our comrades, and our futures to engage in healing, community building, and the creation of kinship. We strive to educate, empower, and embolden each other through sharing skills, knowledge, and resources as we build towards the liberation of all oppressed peoples.

BSA is a vehicle to empower and elevate queer and trans voices, particularly those belonging to queer and trans people of color, to allow our communities a seat at the table on key decision making processes that impact the LGBTQ community of Chicago at large. By focusing our efforts on creating space and building capacity in three key areas, we aim to create opportunities for our communities to thrive unapologetically in their truths:

- Health and Wellness
- Leadership Development
- Visibility

BSA pushes the language of “safety” because we understand that safety for our general society is a concept that actually oppresses us. We are revising our language, instead emphasizing the importance of bravery, because it requires bravery to confront the systems that deny trans people of color true safety. Our goal in using this framework is to help the TGNC community better understand and rise to the challenges of genuine dialogue for social transformation and justice.

www.bravespacealliance.org

Starting the Day

Opening Panel – 412/407

Facilitator: Coriama Davis

Panelists: Marta Collazo, Polly Williams, Laura Madalinski, Michaela Lovegood

Topic: Taking the Privilege Out of Polyamory: Addressing Race, Class, Ability, and Sex in the Non-Monogamy Community

In what ways does privilege influence our existence in the non-monogamy community? How do our oppressions impact our ability to navigate polyamory spaces? In what ways do we ignore our privilege as polyamorous folks, identifying more with the ways that we feel marginalized for being non-monogamous? How safe are polyamorous spaces for marginalized folks? An intersectional understanding of ourselves and those in the community is integral to our ability to build a healthy, diverse, and safe community. This understanding is also paramount to our ability to come together to be seen as a community, and to fight for justice both within and outside the community. The opening panel will discuss a variety of privileges and oppressions experienced by members of the non-monogamy community. In this way, all attendees can begin the day with a mutual understanding of the work we are facing together.

Lunch Discussion – 412-407

Facilitators: Rami Henrich, Cindy Trawinski, Eric Levy

Topic: Newbie Q&A

Welcome to all who are new to non-monogamy (and those who love welcoming in the new folks!). Come join us for lunch for a Q&A on the basics of polyamory. Bring your questions, your concerns, and your comments. Facilitators will help keep the discussion focused and flowing.

Class Session I – 10:15

“No More Spoons” – Room 718

Elliott Lugo and Emma Fine

After a brief discussion of “The Spoon Theory” by Christine Miserandino, we will guide participants in identifying the hidden energy drains in their lives. Often overlooked are the privilege differences between partners, the stress of closeting, medical and environmental burdens particular to the intersectionalities we all possess. Using activities (Privilege Walk, puzzle games) we hope to show that not all partners come to a relationship with the same tools, or spoons, and how that can affect the relationship. But have hope, dear participants, there are ways to stay positive with your partners! We will cover the ethical part of spoon sharing, technology to streamline non-monogamy, metamour dynamics regarding personal and relationship energy, and when the right, and wrong, time is to say “no”. Our hope is the participants leave their time with us with better knowledge of how each individual is responsible for nurturing their partners, their relationships, and themselves.

Non-Monogamy as an Intersecting Identity: Examining Values, Privilege, and Power in Non- Monogamous Relationships – Room 719

August Stockwell and Worner Leland

When deciding on a relationship model that works for us, it is important to be cognizant of our values, needs, and boundaries. It is also important, however, to be cognizant of our various other identities, and to examine the ways in which our intersections impact how we “do” non-monogamy. This presentation will invite attendees to examine and articulate their values in relation to their non-monogamy, to better communicate relationship structure needs and keep that non-monogamy ethical.

Class Session I, con't, 10:15

Polyamory On Screen: Featuring “Two in the Bush”, a Love Story – Room 720

Laura Madalinski

Laura Madalinski, co-writer, co-executive producer, and director of the poly-positive feature film “Two in the Bush: A Love Story”, will be leading a discussion on the importance of representation in the media. The media portrays us as they see fit until we begin to speak for ourselves, and this discussion will guide participants through the ways that the media gets representation right, and the ways that we still need to represent ourselves. The class will include a short intro from Laura, clips from various web series, television, and films depicting polyamory, as well as clips from “Two in the Bush”.

Deconstructing the Heteropatriarchy in Romantic Relationships Between Women – Room 721

Itzel Jihan

Have you ever found yourself connecting with women, yet unable to move forward toward a more romantic-based relationship? Why does it sometimes seem so hard for women to establish romantic relationships with other women, but easy to establish the same with men/non-women? In this workshop, we will establish a safe space in which to discuss our fears, concerns, and questions related to dating other women, and work on deconstructing the heteropatriarchal values embedded in us that may be preventing us from moving forward into creating romantic relationships with other women. This session is open to all women.

Class Session II – 1:15

Queer Non-Monogamy Panel – Room 718

Facilitator: Sarah Sloane;

Panelists: Coriama Davis, Marta Collazo, Aericka Helf, Chad Wilson

This panel will discuss the various privileges and oppressions faced by the LGBTQIA community as it intersects with the non-monogamy community. Specifically, panelists will begin the discussion with such topics as: the marginalization and fetishization of queer folks in a polyamorous community that is heavily heteronormative; transitions and intersections and differences in relationship types; how to come out, be out, and present oneself without shame as a queer non-monogamous person; and how to communicate with openness and transparency in order to have one's needs met

How to Fall in Love in 36 Questions – Room 719

Shawn Coleman

Want to fall in love? Studies have shown that mutual vulnerability quickens the path to love. Come meet a complete stranger and test out this theory for yourself. Together we'll answer these questions and eye gaze; in order to promote deep connection. By the end, I predict that everyone will feel closer to everyone else. About the Love Experiment: A couple of decades ago, a psychologist decided to test this thing called love. His team developed a series of personal questions & proved that mutual vulnerability can shorten the path to intimacy. Does it work? Honestly? Yes. Over the past 3 years, I have tested this out. I have seen multiple romantic relationships develop. If sparks don't fly, you can still have fun getting to know yourself and other compassionate, silly, & interesting people.

Maintaining Long Distance Connections – Room 720

Jasmine Banks

Cis-heteronormative scripts give us a plenty of fodder for how to navigate long distance relations--- but what does this dynamic look like inside of non-monogamous relationships? This session will seek to answer these questions while giving workshop attendees practical tools to improve their long-distance connections.

Class Session III – 3:00

Neurodiversity in Non-Monogamous Relationships Panel – Room 718

Facilitator: Worner Leland;

Panelists: Ash Friday, Zayah Abel, Mo Deslandes, Ishaan G

Neurodiversity is concept that honors neurological differences as natural human variability that should be respected instead of pathologized. The neurodiversity umbrella encompasses neurological differences, including intellectual or developmental differences. This includes differences associated with labels like ADHD, Anxiety, Autism, Bipolar, Depression, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Epilepsy, OCD, PTSD, and many others. Some view their neurodivergence as part of their external experiences, while others view it as a core part of their identity. For many it shapes how they navigate the world. During this panel discussion we hope to explore how our individual experiences of neurodiversity impact our non-monogamy. We will examine what building affirming, neurodiverse non-monogamous community looks like, how to be supportive of neurodivergent partners and community members, how to navigate different communication needs and styles, & more.

Space for Ace – Room 719

Erica Tesla

A discussion of how to make space for asexual and aromantic folks and relationships in poly spaces.

Body Beautiful: Sexual Power for Different Bodies – Room 720

Sarah Sloane

Almost nobody has a model's body, yet sometimes, we feel shame or guilt when our bodies don't look, act, or feel like the folks we see in the media (not to mention porn!). Instead of focusing on how our bodies aren't like theirs (whether because of size, age, race, mobility, or strength), let's talk about how to have the best sex of our lives in the bodies that we live (and love!) in. We'll cover how we look at our bodies, explore our strengths, and come up with ways to make sex (solo or partnered) even sexier, more pleasurable, and more authentic.

Class Session III, con't – 3:00

Single and Solo Polyamory in the Queer and Non-Monogamy Community – Room 721

Niki G

This class will be a lively discussion on the various forms of polyamory outside of primary/anchor partner bond. We'll have an interactive discussion on single and solo poly, in which we define single poly and solo poly and extract the similarities and differences. We'll discuss how single and solo polyamorists are viewed in the non-monogamous community and the challenges these perceptions cause. We'll see how single and solo poly blend into the polyamorous community in its entirety and then we'll tweeze out the LGBTQI section and compare it to the overall community. We'll also discuss non-monogamy in all its variations. After this discussion you will be more knowledgeable about the terms single and solo poly, you'll have real world examples to see it at work in current situation and how it may apply to your non-monogamous lifestyle.

Presenters

Zayah Abel

Zayah is a non-binary, autistic, queer, non-monogamous young person. They are passionate about making art, playing Overwatch and DnD with online friends, and devouring mint chocolate chip ice cream while binge watching various shows. They have a knack for knowing truly intriguing information about the world, and bring their whole new perspectives to their interactions with others.

Jasmine Banks

Jasmine Banks is a licensed therapist, digital organizer, and freelance writer.

Shawn Coleman

Shawn is an open-hearted professional cuddler and workshop facilitator; who discovered polyamory in college (so cliché, right). Shawn first engaged as a participant, attending nearly every cuddle party; then, as a facilitator in training, assisting with every party. The strong focus on consent and awareness spoke to Shawn. Since that time, Shawn has been hard at work queering the cuddle scene. As the country's first out genderqueer cuddle professional, Shawn offers 1 on 1 cuddle sessions and creates Cuddle Up events and Question Game events that are intentionally affirming of the queer and the questioning. These events are one of the many ways that Shawn helps people to connect with others through mutually vulnerable experiences. Shawn also maintains a cuddle space at Chicago Queer Spa, a spa takeover event for people who do not feel accepted/ affirmed in gendered, heteronormative spas.

Marta Collazo

Marta has explored self-care since her early adult years, studying self-examination and eye gazing meditation. She has written narratives to explore the gap between attachment, suffering, and surrender, and encourages a sex-positive spiritual movement where we can foster forgiveness of self and others.

Presenters

Coriama Davis

Coriama is an artist, activator, and aesthetic consultant whose work is all about the ABC'S (art, beauty, culture, and sexuality). She aims to utilize the ABC'S as a means to create broader understandings of social change, beauty sentiments, and liberation. She states "the ABC'S intersect and interact to make up the unique lens through which all of us experience life!" Coriama, also the founder of sex KiKi, a sex-positive community, and queer media outlet. Utilizing sexUALITY as a healing art, their intent is to dissect pleasure and desire through radical dialogue and visual art

Mo Deslandes

See website for Bio.

Emma Fine

Emma is a student of the School of Hard Knocks. Through her studies she has gained "experience" and "wisdom." Her post-graduate work has led her to develop networks of caring, open-minded people to whom she is a mentor and collaborator. Finding great satisfaction in telling people what to do with their lives, she has recently applied to return to an accredited college to pursue a career in paid Social Work. She spends her time with two partners, four kids, one grouch of a cat, numerous friends, and even sometimes makes time to spend alone with herself.

Ash Friday, they/them

Ash Friday is a proud, professional pervert who's taught adult sex, kink, and health education since 2012, though they've been in the industry even longer. They live for the places where the strange and fantastical meet practical concerns, and constantly explore how the most mundane and unexpected parts of our identities can have concrete impact on how we play and love. Ash attends school for psychology with a focus on gender and disability studies and (in their spare time) investigates the influence of -isms, constructive and harmful. They view the navigation of mental health, emotional growth, and processing pain and trauma as integral to all relationships, starting with the relationship to self. Ash works in some of Chicago's longest-standing kink & sex-positive spaces and has taught at a range of events from Dark Odyssey, Bound in Boston, Twisted Tryst, and Chi-Fi to various schools, stores, and private events.

Presenters

Niki G

NIKI GEE is a sex positive, lesbian, solo-polyamorist. She is the president of Quare Square Collective, a non-profit for Queer Artists of Color. She is currently studying sacred sexual healing which is a way to assist in ridding humanity of the shame and guilt experienced around sexuality or what society may deem "deviant" sexuality. The mother of 2 sons is also a massage therapist and a spoken word artist. My mission is to help myself and others. "make living that best part of being alive".™



Quare Square Collective, Inc.
Midwest Queer Artists of Color Non-Profit

Ishaan G

See website for Bio.

Aericka Helf

Aericka is a lifelong camper and concert aficionado, who does graphic design work on her weekdays. After exiting a 15 year monogamous marriage, they became active in the Chicago poly community a year ago. While that has not been without its challenges, polyamory has brought Aericka more freedom and awakening than they have ever experienced before. They have been openly queer for 38 years, and openly gender non-conforming for 2 years. Living authentically, in an openly queer life, has earned Aericka the ability to face and overcome challenges with compassion, integrity, and understanding.

Rami Henrich

Rami Henrich, L.C.S.W., is a Diplomate in Process-oriented Psychology and a certified Imago Relationship Therapist who works with inner and outer diversity issues and embraces a spectrum of people and their problems. Rami has been co-facilitating the Chicago Polyamory Support Group since 2010, and is a founding partner of LifeWorks Psychotherapy Center. She is a sex-positive therapist has a special interest in working with relationship difficulties and those who identify as living an alternative lifestyle.

Presenters

Itzel Jihan

Itzel Jihan has been actively practicing polyamory for five years, and thinking about it for even longer (thanks, Mom!) They are a founder and facilitator of the non-monogamy social and support group in their community. Itzel is a queer femme living in the middle of a corn desert, and spends a lot of time thinking about their queer identity and grappling with related feelings of isolation. Noticing a lack of space for queer non-men specifically, Itzel hopes to work on creating those spaces and focusing more attention and energy on queer women and non-men.

Worner Leland

Worner Leland, MS, BCBA (they/them) is the Director of Development and Promotion at Upswing Advocates. Worner is also an Adjunct Faculty member at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and is President of the Association for Behavior Analysis International Sexual Behavior Research and Practice Special Interest Group.

As a queer, non-binary, neurodivergent, non-monogamous human, they are passionate about education to expand access to affirming care, and about building avenues for community care and affirmation.



Eric Levy

Eric Levy is a high school Humanities teacher who has also published articles on music in film in assorted magazines and journals. A native to the Chicago area, he feels he has been polyamorous his entire life, practicing consensual non-monogamy since 2014. He has become an important fixture in Chicago's polyamory community since then, co-hosting the Chicago Polyamory Connection's Newbie Workshop, organizing lunch after the monthly support group, and volunteering at the 1st Annual Chicago Non-Monogamy Conference. Because of his outgoing personality and knack for exposing new people to polyamory, his friends in the community have dubbed him "the Mayor of Polytown".

Presenters

Michaela Lovegood

Michaela Lovegood brings over 20 years of experience in the areas of anti-oppression training facilitation, local, national and international grassroots community organizing, and organizational effectiveness consultation. For the last 15 years, Michaela has worked as a professional community organizer, organizing grassroots groups around issue- and constituency-based social justice issues, including human rights, LGBTQ and youth rights, police brutality, criminal justice, violence against women, access to affordable housing, hunger, and education. Michaela has provided organizational effectiveness consultations to nonprofits, including developing fundraising plans, grant writing, and individual donor development; board and membership development, training curriculum development, and retreat and meeting facilitation. For more than 20 years, she has facilitated anti-oppression classes and workshops with a focus on eliminating the division, scarcity and disconnection between and among all people that is caused by systemic oppression and mistreatment. Currently Michaela is the Field Director for People's Action/ People's Action Institute, a national grassroots network with local affiliated organizations in 30 states.

Elliot Lugo

Elliott is a social worker with ten years of experience in the Addictions and Mental Health Field. He enjoys playing with his son, snuggling with his partner, video games, comic books, political discussions, & pretty much anything involving Batman. He is in his first ethically non-monogamous relationship, in which there are plenty of deep RADAR conversations, hugs, laughs, tears, and tacos.

Laura Madalinski

Laura Madalinski spent her childhood in West Virginia, where she was queer before she knew it had a name. She studied film and video at Columbia College Chicago before launching a career in post-production. After working in-house for eight years, she started her own company, Strange Charm, in 2013. She wrote *Two in the Bush: A Love Story* with her partner Kelly Haas. The film is Laura's directorial debut.

Presenters

Sarah Sloane

Sarah Sloane is a sexuality and relationships education, writer, and activist from Chicago, IL. Sarah firmly believes that love is a radical act, and as such, her goal is to contribute to making spaces where that love can be affirmed, in all its varieties. She has spoken at colleges, professional organizations, affinity groups, and industry events for over 15 years, and she's written for a wide variety of websites and magazines about sexuality and relationship topics. Outside of her work, she spends time with her partners and friends, the free weight section of her gym, her knitting, her coffee pot, and her teddy bear, Stuart. (website: www.sarahsloane.net, twitter @Sarah Sloane).

August (Fawna) Stockwell

August (Fawna) Stockwell, PhD, BCBA-D (they/them) is the Founder and Director of Research and Programs at Upswing Advocates: a nonprofit organization that uses a self-as-expert approach to research and education that strengthens and supports the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) community in Chicago and the surrounding areas. Over the past 10 years, their research has focused on topics including polyamory, communication in relationships, gender, sexual behavior, BDSM, mindfulness, and effective skill-building strategies. They have a vision of using precise measurement and an individualized approach to connect people to affirming, accessible interventions that create meaningful change. August is also the Associate Director of Research in the Applied Behavior Analysis Department at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and is a member of the Board of Directors at Howard Brown Health.

Erica Tesla

Erica Tesla is a jack-of-all-trades, maker, and mother living in Chicago. A great theme of her life is making complicated stuff make sense, which is handy for an asexual polyamorist. Occasionally published and privately prolific, she seems to do her best sense-making in various word-based media. When she isn't writing outrageous numbers of words, she spends time with her children and partners, goes to the gym, and purchases craft supplies with intent to distribute.

Presenters

Cindy Trawinski

Cindy Trawinski, Psy.D., is a Diplomate in Process-oriented Psychology and a certified Imago Relationship Therapist. Cindy is the former CEO of the Process Work Institute, in Portland, OR and a member of the International Association of Process-oriented Psychology (IAPOP), in Zurich, Switzerland. She has been co-facilitating the Chicago Polyamory Support Group since 2010, and is a founding partner of LifeWorks Psychotherapy Center. Cindy has studied, taught and applied Process-oriented Psychology (also known as processwork) as developed by Arnold Mindell, Ph.D., for over 15 years. She is a sex-positive therapist who has a special interest in working with relationship difficulties and those who identify as living an alternative lifestyle.

Polly Williams

See website for Bio.

Chad Wilson

Chad Wilson has been active in sex-positive education for several years. He currently serves on the board for Leathermen of Recovery, a club for kinky queer folks in recovery from substance abuse and behavioral addictions. He is a member of a poly constellation consisting of 10 local individuals and more out of town. Currently, he has two partners, once of whom is a power exchange dynamic. He has organized panels and workshop on topics such as Healthy and Unhealthy Dependence with Chicago Power Exchange and Negotiation and Communication with Chicago Puppy Patrol.

Event Schedule

Event Schedule

	4th Floor Hall	407/412	Room 718	Room 719	Room 720	Room 721
8:30-10:15	check in and name badges					
8:30-9:30		meet n greet/social (meet folks and mingle, info tables, coffee/juice/light snacks)				
9:30-10:15		introduction and Opening Panel				
10:15-11:45 Class Session I			No More Spoons	Non-Monogamy as an Intersecting Identity	Poly on Screen: "Two in the Bush"	Deconstruction Heteropatriarchy in Romantic Relationships Between Women
11:45-1:15		lunch on your own + Newbie Lunch Discussion				
1:15-2:45 Class Session II			Queer Non-Monogamy Panel	How to Fall in Love in 36 Questions	Maintaining Connections Over Distance	
3:00-4:30 Class Session III			Neurodiversity Panel	Space for Ace	Body Beautiful	Single and Solo Poly in the Queer and Non-Monogamy Communities
4:30-5:00		closing conference				

Special Thanks

Thank you for supporting the creation of CNMC!

August, Polly, Lilly, Kyle, Aericka, Tina and Coriama

Without you, this would not have been possible!

If you enjoyed the CNMC, then you should check out:

REF | RELATIONSHIP EQUALITY
FOUNDATION

Relationship Equality Foundation (REF)

CNMC is hosted by The Relationship Equality Foundation, Inc. (REF). REF's purpose is to provide outreach, education, and support for those involved in or seeking relationships with non-traditional structures, and education and outreach to the general public about these relationships.



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