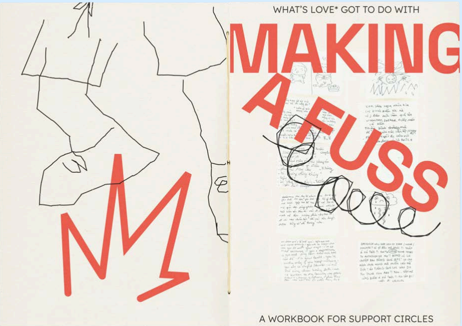
Making A Fuss

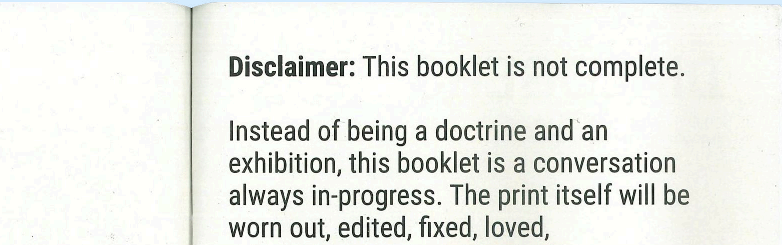
A Participatory Workbook for Support Circles


WHAT'S LOVE* GOT TO DO WITH
MAKING
A FUSS
A WORKBOOK FOR SUPPORT CIRCLES

Historically, the phrase "STOP MAKING A FUSS" is often used abusively by those in authority as a way to say,

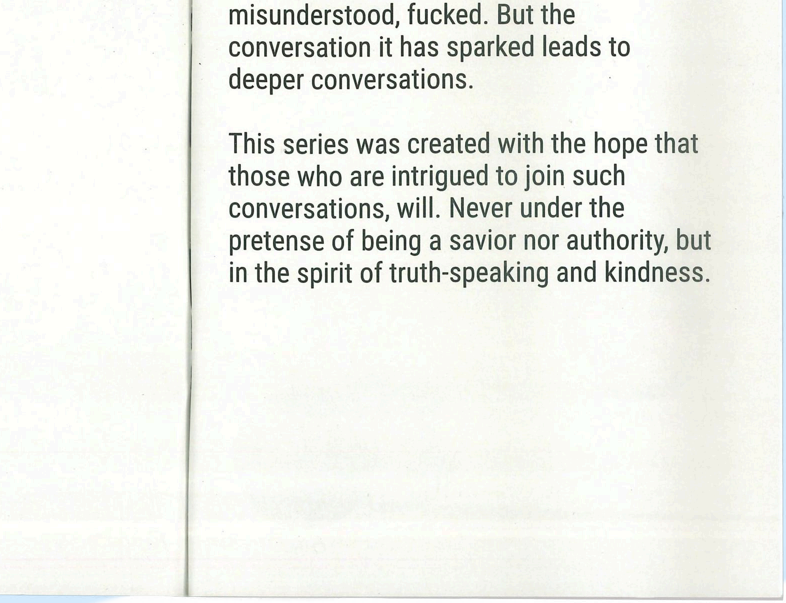
> "You are wrong. Please stop creating unnecessary drama: Stop. Fussing."

In this project, I challenge such oppression by GIVING LANGUAGE to this fuss-practice while championing stories of making fusses (i.e., caring and drawing attention to what matters).



Disclaimer: This booklet is not complete.

Instead of being a doctrine and an exhibition, this booklet is a conversation always in-progress. The print itself will be worn out, edited, fixed, loved,



misunderstood, fucked. But the conversation it has sparked leads to deeper conversations.

This series was created with the hope that those who are intrigued to join such conversations, will. Never under the pretense of being a savior nor authority, but in the spirit of truth-speaking and kindness.

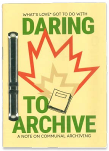
←---------------------

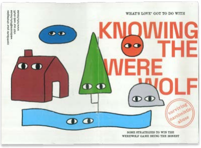
The first page from the workbook.

June 2024

An episode in the series
WHAT'S LOVE* GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Other booklets in the series:


WHAT'S LOVE* GOT TO DO WITH
DARING TO ARCHIVE
A NOTE ON COMMUNAL ARCHIVING


WHAT'S LOVE* GOT TO DO WITH
KNOWING THE WEREWOLF
surviving narcissistic abuse
SOME STRATEGIES TO WIN THE WEREWOLF GAME BEING THE HONEST

What's Love* Got To Do With
INTIMACY & REVOLUTION
A REFLECTION ON

What's Love* Got To Do With
PATTERN THEORY
& LIVING DESIGNS?
featuring
CHRISTOPHER ALEXANDER

CATEGORY:

Self-Publication
Relational Activism
Participatory Creation
Engagement Through Dialogue
Documentation of Projecation*

*: *What is Projecation* is presented below

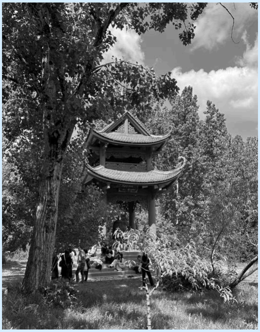
Motivation

In the Spring of 2024, I attended an Asian retreat at the world-renowned peace center, Plum Village, in France.

However, during the ongoing genocide in Gaza and other political crises, the peace at Plum Village caused unease among some participants, who asked:

Why is there no mention of the ongoing war?

How can we claim to live mindfully and compassionately if we don't address the suffering that's so widespread?



Under the Big Bell, some of us began gathering to discuss how we could raise this concern with the community

When our peace letter was read during a public Q&A, the entire hall of participants stood with us. This quiet protest was followed by a series of changes within Plum Village, though it also met with resistance from those who saw a threat in breaking neutrality.

To continue this conversation in the apolitical scene of Vietnam, where the governing regime prevents participation in political matters,

I introduced the personal practice of "fussing".

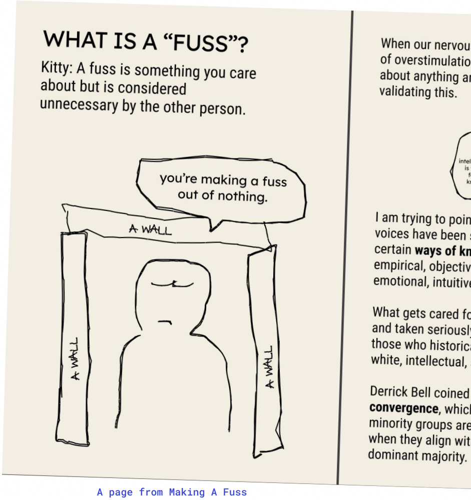
A FUSS IS AN ACTIVISM. IT IS PERSONAL, BUT ONCE VOICED, IT DISRUPTS THE SYSTEM.

It asks:

who decides
what is Right
and Wrong?

who decides
what's (un)necessary?

Fuss workbook encourages readers to see and voice what they want changed, offering a personal and relational way of engaging in activism.



WHAT IS A "FUSS"?

Kitty: A fuss is something you care about but is considered unnecessary by the other person.

you're making a fuss out of nothing.
A WALL
A WALL
A WALL

When our nervou
of overstimulatio
about anything a
validating this.

I am trying to poin
voices have been
certain **ways of kn**
empirical, objectiv
emotional, intuitive

What gets cared fo
and taken seriousl
those who historic
white, intellectual,

Derrick Bell coined
convergence, which
minority groups are
when they align wit
dominant majority.

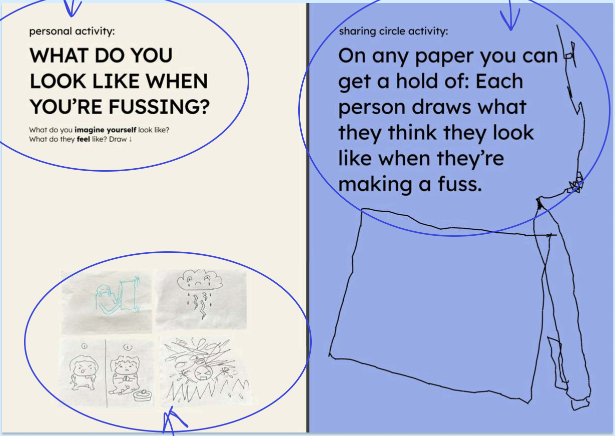
A page from Making A Fuss

Workbook

Create a living workbook on fussing that documented voices from real and concerned people.

activity for personal introspection

questions for sharing in a circle



personal activity:

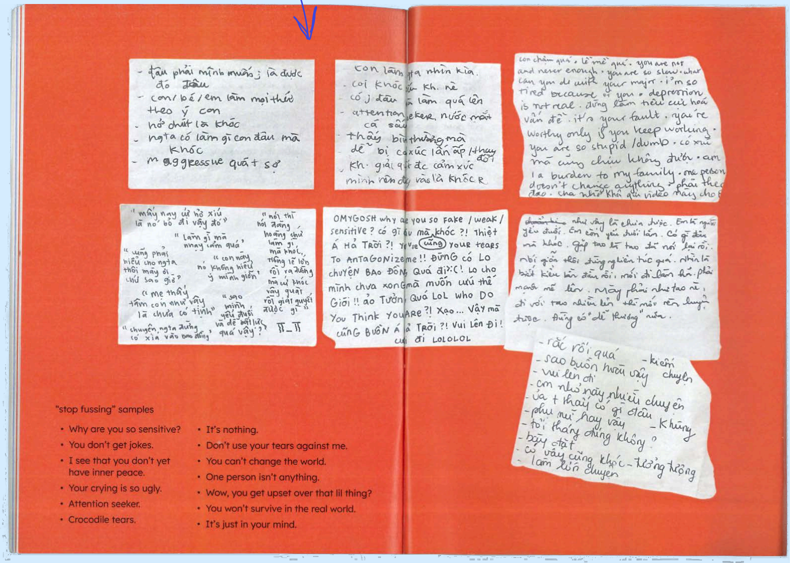
WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE WHEN YOU'RE FUSSING?

What do you **imagine yourself** look like?
What do they **feel** like? Draw ↓

sharing circle activity:

On any paper you can get a hold of: Each person draws what they think they look like when they're making a fuss.

accompanied by real answers from multiple people



- đâu phải mình muốn j là được đó đâu
- con/bé/em làm mọi thứ theo ý con
- hở chút là khóc
- ngta có làm gì con đâu mà khóc
- m aggressive quá + sợ

con làm ngta nhìn kìa.
- coi khóc kìa Kh. nè
- có j đâu mà làm quá lên
- attention seeker. nước mắt cá sấu
- thấy bình thường mà
- dễ bị cảm xúc lấn áp / thay đổi
- kh. giải quyết đc cảm xúc mình rồi dỗ vào là khóc r

con chậm quá. lề mề quá. you are not and never enough. you are so slow. what can you do with your major. i'm so tired because of you. depression is not real. đừng làm tiêu cực hoá vấn đề. it's your fault. you're worthy only if you keep working. you are so stupid/dumb. có xíu mà cũng chịu không được. am I a burden to my family. one person doesn't change anything. phải theo đạo. cha nhờ khả gửi video này cho

"mấy nay cứ hở xíu là nó bỏ đi vậy đó"

"làm gì mà nhạy cảm quá"

"cũng phải hiểu cho ngta thôi mày ơi chứ sao giờ"

"con này nó không hiểu ý mình giỡn"

"mẹ thấy tâm con như vậy là chưa có tình"

"chuyện ngta đừng có xía vào bao đồng"

"sao mình yếu đuối và dễ bất lực quá vậy?"

"nói thì nói đàng hoàng chứ làm gì, mà khóc, tiếng lẽ lớn rồi ra đường mà cứ khóc vậy quài, rồi giải quyết được gì"

TT_TT

OMYGOSH why are you so fake / weak / sensitive? có gì đâu mà khóc?! Thiệt Á Hả Trời?! You're using your tears To AntaGoNize me!! ĐỪNG có Lo chuyện BAo ĐỒNG Quá đi :'(! Lo cho mình chưa xonG mà muốn cứu thế Giới!! ảo Tưởng Quá LOL who Do You Think You ARE?! Xạo... Vậy mà cũnG BUỒN Á hả Trời?! Vui Lên Đi! cười đi LOLOLOL

~~[illegible]~~ như vậy là chịu được. Em là người yếu đuối. Em còn yếu đuối lắm. Có gì đâu mà khóc. Gặp tao là tao đã nói lại rồi. Nói giỡn thôi, đừng nghiêm túc quá. Nhìn là biết kiểu bị đần rồi, mới đi làm hả. Phải mạnh mẽ lên. Mày phải như tao nè, đi với tao nhiều lên thì mới rèn luyện được. Đừng có "dễ thương" nữa.

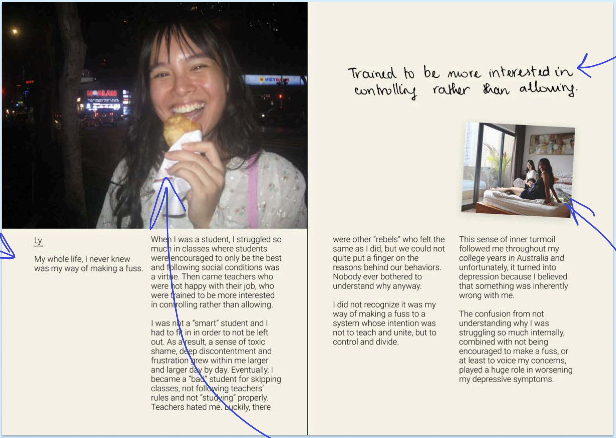
- rắc rối quá
- sao buồn hoài vậy
- vui lên đi
- em nhớ này nhiều chuyện
- ủa t thấy có gì đâu
- phụ nữ hay vậy
- tôi thấy đúng không?
- bày đặt
- có vậy cũng khóc
- làm lớn chuyện
- kiếm chuyện
- khùng
- tưởng tượng

"stop fussing" samples

- Why are you so sensitive?
- You don't get jokes.
- I see that you don't yet have inner peace.
- Your crying is so ugly.
- Attention seeker.
- Crocodile tears.
- It's nothing.
- Don't use your tears against me.
- You can't change the world.
- One person isn't anything.
- Wow, you get upset over that lil thing?
- You won't survive in the real world.
- It's just in your mind.

fuss stories from different participants

personal artifacts like handwritten notes



Trained to be more interested in controlling rather than allowing.

Ly

My whole life, I never knew was my way of making a fuss.

When I was a student, I struggled so much in classes where students were encouraged to only be the best and following social conditions was a virtue. Then came teachers who were not happy with their job, who were trained to be more interested in controlling rather than allowing.

I was not a "smart" student and I had to fit in in order to not be left out. As a result, a sense of toxic shame, deep discontentment and frustration grew within me larger and larger day by day. Eventually, I became a "bad" student for skipping classes, not following teachers' rules and not "studying" properly. Teachers hated me. Luckily, there were other "rebels" who felt the same as I did, but we could not quite put a finger on the reasons behind our behaviors. Nobody ever bothered to understand why anyway.

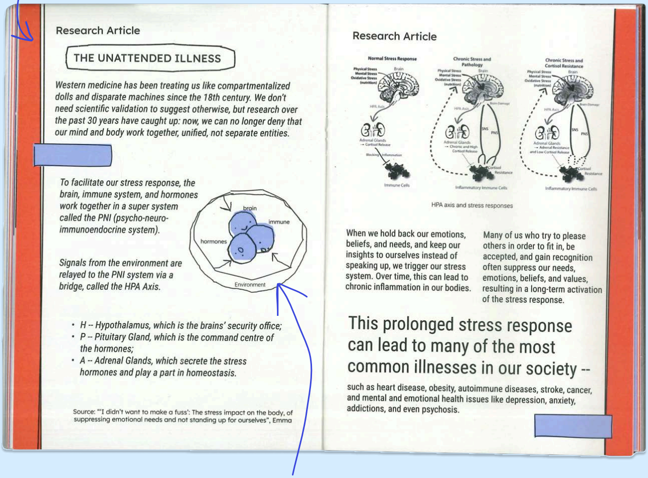
I did not recognize it was my way of making a fuss to a system whose intention was not to teach and unite, but to control and divide.

This sense of inner turmoil followed me throughout my college years in Australia and unfortunately, it turned into depression because I believed that something was inherently wrong with me.

The confusion from not understanding why I was struggling so much internally, combined with not being encouraged to make a fuss, or at least to voice my concerns, played a huge role in worsening my depressive symptoms.

photos from our gathering methodology called Projecation

include research essay



Research Article

THE UNATTENDED ILLNESS

Western medicine has been treating us like compartmentalized dolls and disparate machines since the 18th century. We don't need scientific validation to suggest otherwise, but research over the past 30 years have caught up: now, we can no longer deny that our mind and body work together, unified, not separate entities.

To facilitate our stress response, the brain, immune system, and hormones work together in a super system called the PNI (psycho-neuro-immunoendocrine system).

Signals from the environment are relayed to the PNI system via a bridge, called the HPA Axis.

brain
immune
hormones
Environment

- *H -- Hypothalamus, which is the brains' security office;*
- *P -- Pituitary Gland, which is the command centre of the hormones;*
- *A -- Adrenal Glands, which secrete the stress hormones and play a part in homeostasis.*

Source: "'I didn't want to make a fuss': The stress impact on the body, of suppressing emotional needs and not standing up for ourselves", Emma

Research Article

Normal Stress Response
Physical Stress
Mental Stress
Oxidative Stress (nutrition)
Brain
HPA Axis
Adrenal Glands → Cortisol Release
Blocking Inflammation
Immune Cells
Chronic Stress and Pathology
Physical Stress
Mental Stress
Oxidative Stress (nutrition)
Brain
Brain Damage
HPA Axis
SNS
PNS
Adrenal Glands → Chronic and High Cortisol Release
Cortisol Resistance
Inflammatory Immune Cells
Chronic Stress and Cortisol Resistance
Physical Stress
Mental Stress
Oxidative Stress (nutrition)
Brain
Brain Damage
HPA Axis
SNS
PNS
Adrenal Glands → Adrenal Resistance and Low Cortisol Release
Cortisol Resistance
Inflammatory Immune Cells

HPA axis and stress responses

When we hold back our emotions, beliefs, and needs, and keep our insights to ourselves instead of speaking up, we trigger our stress system. Over time, this can lead to chronic inflammation in our bodies.

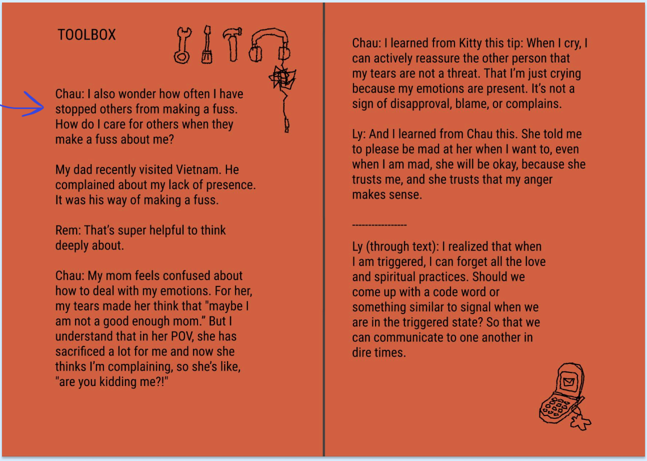
Many of us who try to please others in order to fit in, be accepted, and gain recognition often suppress our needs, emotions, beliefs, and values, resulting in a long-term activation of the stress response.

This prolonged stress response can lead to many of the most common illnesses in our society --

such as heart disease, obesity, autoimmune diseases, stroke, cancer, and mental and emotional health issues like depression, anxiety, addictions, and even psychosis.

illustrations by Trixie Gia Hân

transcriptions of real
discussions about fussing



TOOLBOX

Chau: I also wonder how often I have stopped others from making a fuss. How do I care for others when they make a fuss about me?

My dad recently visited Vietnam. He complained about my lack of presence. It was his way of making a fuss.

Rem: That's super helpful to think deeply about.

Chau: My mom feels confused about how to deal with my emotions. For her, my tears made her think that "maybe I am not a good enough mom." But I understand that in her POV, she has sacrificed a lot for me and now she thinks I'm complaining, so she's like, "are you kidding me?!"

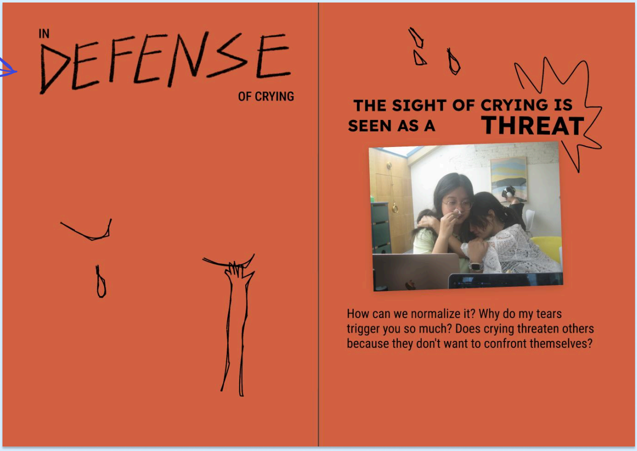
Chau: I learned from Kitty this tip: When I cry, I can actively reassure the other person that my tears are not a threat. That I'm just crying because my emotions are present. It's not a sign of disapproval, blame, or complains.

Ly: And I learned from Chau this. She told me to please be mad at her when I want to, even when I am mad, she will be okay, because she trusts me, and she trusts that my anger makes sense.

Ly (through text): I realized that when I am triggered, I can forget all the love and spiritual practices. Should we come up with a code word or something similar to signal when we are in the triggered state? So that we can communicate to one another in dire times.

from there, offering real-
life and practical
toolkits for fussing

statements on personal
activistic practices



IN DEFENSE OF CRYING

THE SIGHT OF CRYING IS SEEN AS A THREAT

How can we normalize it? Why do my tears trigger you so much? Does crying threaten others because they don't want to confront themselves?

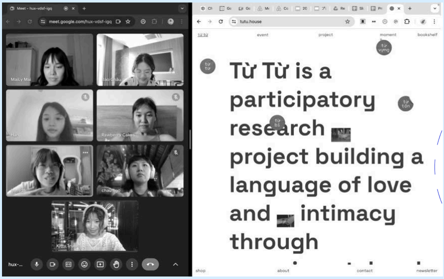
METHODOLOGY

PROJECATION*

- Coined by Shotaro Yagi and made into a methodology by Kitty

- **A Project + Vacation:** using intimate and self-actualizing activities to build a project.

Step 1: We agree to do a projecation.



Từ Từ is a participatory research project building a language of love and intimacy through

meet.google.com/hux-vdsf-igq
MaiLy Mai
Rawberry Cakes
chau ngo
Kitty Tru
tutu.house
từ từ
event
project
moment
bookshelf
shop
about
contact
newsletter

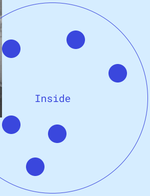
Digital meeting.

Step 2: We first meet and hang outside.

Outside

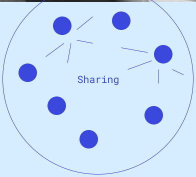
Step 3: We stay in the vacation house together.

Doing QiGong in morning
after waking up together.



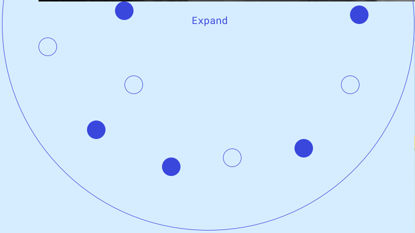
Step 4: Each person hosts an activity they love.

One person hosted a
skincare ritual.

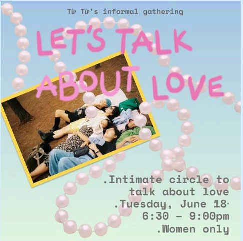


Another person hosted an
intimate painting event.

Step 4: We host a bigger circle.

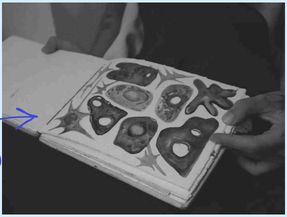


our poster


Tử Tử's informal gathering
LET'S TALK ABOUT LOVE

.Intimate circle to
talk about love
.Tuesday, June 18·
6:30 - 9:00pm
.Women only

we hosted 6-7 new friends
and introduced our topic
on Fussing

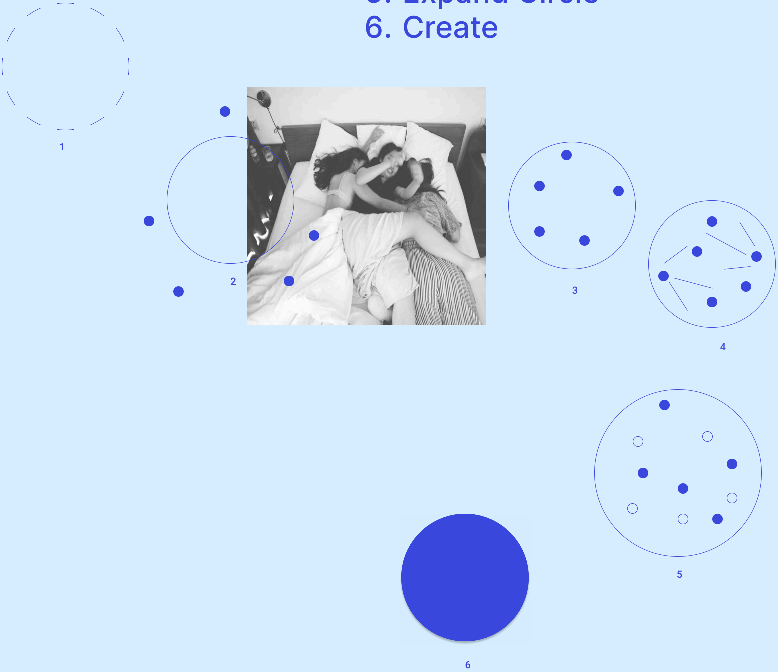


a participant drew the
feelings of fuss

Step 5: Co-authorship on the workbook.

The steps to my design of projecation are:

1. Invite
2. Hang Out
3. Stay In
4. Share Joy
5. Expand Circle
6. Create



Reasons to test out projecation:

- Bored and dissatisfied with business-as-usual.
- Shared belief: projects can be more human, self-actualizing, authentic, and loving.
- Test Kitty's insight: *intimacy* (shared self-disclosure) is a critical part of self-actualizing and self-organizing projects.

Relational Activism:

"working with empathy, compassion, the ability to connect and form networks, with an understanding that sustained change happens through relationships"

(source)

Fuss: Advocacy for the expression of pain and stop the justification of sufferings.

Going forward

(shared in PTP journal in June 2024)

- How do we bring this insight of intimacy and mutual self-actualization to creative collaboration and world building?
- I am turning this booklet into a full-length book in 2025.

Fuss was sold at community zine fairs in 3 different cities by organic community members who knew about it

to be continued.