A queer resource pack for self isolating LGBTQIA+ peeps, collected by cabaret maker & binary breaker Melody Sproates (& pals!)
STAY HOME AND STAY YOU

A resource pack for self isolating young people, collected by cabaret maker & binary breaker Melody Sproates (& pals!)
Hello! I'm Melody! My pronouns are they/them and I'm a writer and theatre maker. Nice to meet you! If you don't know me, here's the important stuff: I love He-man, 80s horror movies, tattoos, zines, Jack Black, theatre shows, lip syncing and I just watched The Tiger King. I am also trans / non-binary and experience gender dysphoria.

(Warning: Throughout this resource myself or others may refer to LGBTQIA+ people as 'queer', just incase that isn't a comfy word for you.)

During this period of self-isolation, I've been more aware of myself and stuck in my head (ALOT) - I have been thinking a lot about my body and gender more than ever. I didn't realise how much of my identity and queerness is tied with the outside world - whether this be other people or events. Now all of this feels mushy and confusing, and I feel quite distant from the person I thought I was before all of this happened. I was also gutted that Transgender day of Visibility (March 31st) was coming up during lockdown and I wouldn't have the chance to celebrate my identity with my friends and allies.

I'm lucky enough to be living in a LGBTQIA+ accepting household at the moment, and I acknowledge that a lot of young (and older) LGBTQIA+ folks may not be.

Many queer people have had to go back in the closet and hide who they are from the people they live with just to survive, or things might be worse or sadder. I'm not going to dwell on this too much, I just wanted to share that there are other people out there (like me); you are not alone. And I think that is important now more than ever to remember that.

With all of this in mind, I set out on a queer quest to create a resource that would combine the ideas of celebrating our identities, so they are not forgotten, but in ways which are smaller, quieter and can be done in private.

Soooo... here Stay home, Stay queer was created! A resource pack filled with tips, activities, links, pretty pictures, bright colours and written wisdom from my own personal queer heroes and icons - who have kindly offered some of their time to share some thoughts with you.

The problems of negative representation, homophobia and transphobia are unacceptable, and no-one should be made to feel alone right now. Stay home, stay queer is a small gesture to help you feel some comfort, positivity, read about other queer people's experiences in isolation, and tips on how you can still stay connected with yourself and others. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have putting it together.

PS! I have included little tasks throughout this resource which you can take apart in as many (or as little) as you want! Use the #stayhomestayqueer or my social medias to send your work & I'll share!

Big love, we can do this. Take care and stay safe, stay queer.

Melody x x x
The world seems to have changed in such a short space of time. I’m pretty sure that the term “self isolation” wasn’t on anyone’s lips yet here we are. One thing that hasn’t changed is our sense of community and it is this that is going to pull us through these surreal days. Keep in touch with friends and support organisations via social media, make it a rule to check in with people every day. Learn a new skill such as art or document these days in a diary! We can get through this but we are going to need to get through it together, even if we are physically self isolating. Do not feel alone and be sure that this time will pass. If you aren’t connected with online support, make sure you reach out!

Stay safe everyone, Much love,  
Ellie Lowther <3 Trans activist  
@ ellielouder

Queer Iconz!

Having positive role models in life are so important. Everyone involved in this resource has inspired me in some way regarding my own queer identity, mostly coz they are all so wonderfully themselves!

Task!  
Using #stayhomestayqueer, share your own personal queer icons and favourite inspirational LGBTQIA+ quote! I’d love to see some of the people and words that help you.

Remember we’ve been here before - isolated - in the backs of closets with rainbow running through our bones like Blackpool rock. Do now what you did then - find your people - watch Freaks and Geeks, read Roald Dahl, listen to Skunk Anasie and sleep. Cos once the world grows back it’ll need people as magnificent as you more than ever.

Lee Mattinson, Gay playwright and thetremaker

@ Lee_mattinson

Here are some quotes to get you started…

Becoming more honest with myself gave me the strength to stand up against others.

Jan-willem Van den Bosch,  
Queer theatre maker & director

The world seems to have changed in such a short space of time. I’m pretty sure that the term “self isolation” wasn’t on anyone’s lips yet here we are. One thing that hasn’t changed is our sense of community and it is this that is going to pull us through these surreal days. Keep in touch with friends and support organisations via social media, make it a rule to check in with people every day. Learn a new skill such as art or document these days in a diary! We can get through this but we are going to need to get through it together, even if we are physically self isolating. Do not feel alone and be sure that this time will pass. If you aren’t connected with online support, make sure you reach out!

Stay safe everyone, Much love,  
Ellie Lowther <3 Trans activist  
@ ellielouder
THINGS THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO REMEMBER:

YOUR QUEERNESS DOES NOT EXIST IN A VOID
YOUR QUEERNESS HAS A HIS/HER/THEIR/STORY
YOUR QUEERNESS IS NOT FORGOTTEN
YOUR QUEERNESS HAS A PLACE OUTSIDE OF YOUR HEAD (I PROMISE)
YOUR QUEERNESS IS NOT INVISIBLE.
YOUR QUEERNESS IS RESILIENT
YOUR QUEERNESS IS INSTINCTIVE, INTUITIVE, SPONTANEOUS, UNLEARNED, UNTAUGHT.
YOUR QUEERNESS IS YOURS.
YOU HAVE POWER OVER IT.
YOUR QUEERNESS IS UNSTOPPABLE.
YOUR QUEERNESS DESERVES MORE.
YOUR QUEERNESS IS A THREAT TO THEM BECAUSE IT IS NOT SOMETHING THEY CAN TEACH YOU. IT IS OURS.
OUR QUEERNESS IS NOT A SET OF RULES, CODES THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY LEARNT. IT IS OURS.
OUR QUEERNESS IS THE BREATH THEY WANT TO TAKE. THEY WILL UNDO THEMSELVES, TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THEMSELVES AND OUR QUEERNESS WILL GO ON.

dandyscopic
J G Tansley
I'm lying in my bedroom writing this. Bedrooms and queer people are an interesting thing. We have a talent for creating worlds that are our own. For living just beneath the surface. We're kind of magic that way. Able to exist in two, three places at once. To be a body without borders, without need for the hazy lines of skin. That's cool.

I take a photo of the sky for insta. “Another day in paradise” I caption it. Making sure to crop out the piles of rubbish in the other corner of yard. Builders have been gutting the upstairs flat for weeks. I’m only telling you this because, I’m thinking about how that has surrounded me. The noise of house being torn apart pushed through my ceilings every morning, the piles of debris growing outside my window. And then one day it just stopped. And I felt like I could hear the gentle silence of my room again.

There’s a plant blooming in the cracks in our garden wall. It makes me think of queer people stuck at home. Things bloom in cracks. Vibrant, wild and sprawling things. Amongst the harsh, jagged and hard. In the quiet bits in between. Unseen until they choose to burst out. Think of yourself as that plant.
Right now, this is your crack. Your nook in the wall, your gap in the pavement. You in your bedroom.

The sheets your soil. Make sure you’re drinking enough water. (That’s not a metaphor, just consistent advice). Think of all the other plants hidden in cracks right now. How they are drinking in the sun together. Catching what they can through widows.

Breath; remember how your lungs hold air.

Think about me, you and everyone else. Think about us thinking about each other.

How we are driftwood to one another; buffers to the wind, rain and snow.

The plant in the wall reminds us that beautiful things grow in unexpected places.

Wiggle your toes, pull your mouth into a smile, feel your heart beat; you are growing.

dandyscopic aka J G Tansley
Queer theatre maker & facilitator
@dandyscopic

**TASK!**
Grab a piece of paper & pen and look out of your window. Write about or draw what you can see. Use another colour and write/draw next to it with what you wish you see- Who or what is there? Think about how you would like the world to look like when this is over.
We are all wildflowers, us

Queer folk, us “othered” lot, we are skilled isolators. We know loneliness and we know our selves, we already evolve and navigate the world hiding when needed to protect ourselves. So, where ever you are, how ever you are feeling, remember, there is other wildflowers growing out there, being beautifully and unapologetically themselves too. We may only be able to see each other online or in memories at the moment but we are connected, important and will flourish again together as soon as we can. I look forward to seeing your beauty as soon as it is safe.

Stay safe, stay home
stay soapy x
Phil Douglas,
Curious Arts
@curiousarts
@curious_phil

TASK!
Draw a flower and on each petal write on it something about your identity that you are proud of.
Staying inside is the best thing in the world... when it’s something you actually want to do. I LOVE lazy Sunday mornings watching Simpsons reruns with my own Snowball II and ‘inventing’ weird brunch concoctions (Dorito Shakshuka anyone?). I love a Wednesday evening in, wearing my oldest t-shirt with a record on and a book on the table that I’m ignoring in favour of videos of lizards eating salad on my phone...But when you are FORCED to stay at home, that is a different beast all together. I am a social bean. I like to talk to people all day, more than they like talking to me. I like to go from the swimming pool, to work, to a class, to drinks with friends to an evening catch up with my Mum. I like to go dancing and loudly eat millionaires shortbread in a quiet cinema, and sweat on my best friends at gigs and nudge my colleagues knees at the theatre (consensually) and take punnets of grapes and cans of something fizzy to the park. So naturally it’s hard not to grieve the ghost all of these things in this weird old time. So, whoever and wherever you are, I have put together a list of things/thoughts that are getting me through the days (and I hope maybe you will find it useful too!)....
QUEERNESS IS POWERFUL

We have always adjusted. We have always adapted. We are intuitive connectors. Find your online community and check in on your IRL queerbuds. Learn your history. Discover something new about yourself. Know that we have always existed and we will continue to do so. We can get through this, fabulously! Wear something that makes you feel good and be gay in your garden or your bedroom or your downstairs loo, wherever is safest and most comfortable.

YOU DON’T HAVE TO DO ALL THE THINGS

WRITE A BOOK. PAINT A PICTURE. COMPOSE A FIFTEEN ACT MUSICAL. PITCH AN ARTICLE. MAKE A FILM. ILLUSTRATE A COMIC BOOK. SPLIT THE ATOM!!!! If you fancy doing any of the above, please knock yourself out, but I for one, will be watching 2011 episodes of ‘Don’t Tell the Bride’ and other straight nonsense for the next three months. You are not your work. You are not your productivity. It is okay to rest and heal. One day in the future, you will need this pop culture knowledge for a pub quiz, which you will win and henceforth be known as The Viral Genius.

DO THE THINGS!!!

Okay, I know, blah blah blah PEOPLE ARE HYPOCRITES. If you get the creative nudge, ENJOY IT. So many artists are offering advice and support right now, big institutions are releasing free resources, some of us have time to spend perfecting how to not only pronounce ‘Quinoa’ but also HOW TO COOK IT – upskill yourselves babes, future you will thank you. Stand outside and feel the air, the rain, the sun, bird poop on your face. Feel the heat of your breath on the back of your throat, feel your belly rising and falling, hear the sound of birds, or a tin can rolling, or a car beeping, or absolutely nothing at all. Take 10 minutes to put your phone under your hat and feel your roots dive into the ground and imagine what type of flower you would grow to be. Give your neighbours hayfever and spray them with the hosepipe if they dare to sneeze in your direction.

NOTE YOUR FEELINGS

Notebooks are bae. Notes on your phone are friends. Moods, keywords, mantras, jokes, fears, observations. Look back on your days and track how you’ve been feeling and your experiences. Can you pick out one good thing about each day? Be your own calendar.

I know I’m repeating the chorus to an absolute bop here pals but WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER. I hope you find comfort in that even when you feel all alone, someone somewhere is feeling that too so really everyone is lonely together. Know that we see you, we appreciate you, we thank you for the greatness that is yet to come. And oh yeah, wash your bloomin’ hands.

BIG LOVE. Zoe Murtagh, Queer theatremaker & facilitator
Insta: @zoemurtagh
Twitter: @zoe_murtagh
RAISE YOUR FLAG

By Danni Gilbert and Mandy Barker
@Sailcreative
FLAGS FOR SOLIDARITY

Perhaps you could hang it in your room :)

You will need:

1. Fabric for your flag or banner
2. Felt or scraps of material to cut up
3. Felt tip pens (sharpies are best)
4. Scissors
5. PVA glue
6. A wooden dowel a little longer (or wider) than your piece of fabric (not essential)
7. String/drawing pins for hanging your flag
Using a rectangle piece of material as your canvas (cotton is best, maybe just use an old plain pillowcase) create your own unique flag to represent and celebrate your queer identity. The design of the flag is completely up to you, maybe you could sketch out how you want it to look first on a piece of paper.

Go wild with any felt or scraps of material you might find around the house (don’t forget to get permission first) cut them up to create shapes. There are so many things you can make, like rainbows out of arches, cut out hearts or other simple shapes, add words like proud, love, and yay! The shapes can be glued onto your flag with PVA (this will need a couple of hours to dry before hanging your flag).

If you don’t have any scraps of material you can always draw onto your flag with a pencil and use felt tip pens or acrylic paint (this will need a few hours to dry) to make your super colourful and fun flag.

Once your flag is finished and dry you can use a piece of dowel to create the stick. Roll the dowel around the end of the flag using some PVA to keep it all secure, when dry tie the string to each end of the stick and TA DA you have your very own identity flag that is completely unique to you. If you don’t have any dowel this is fine, you can still hang the flag using drawing pins, it just becomes a banner instead :)

**PS:** Pinterest is great for inspiration too

**PPS:** And here is a link to a little bit of history and information about LGBTQ+ flags http://www.lgbtiq.xyz/lgbt-sexuality-gender-identity-pride-flags/

**PPPS:** We would love to see your awesome flag, you can share it on social media with the hashtag #stayhomestayqueer

*Have fun!*

**Danni and Mandy  xx**

**Insta:** @sailcreative #stayhomestayqueer

**Website:** sailcreative.co.uk
This lockdown has got me feeling a little cooped up... frustrated... I feel like I'm unable to really let me queer self roam, sit in vegetarian cafes, attend free classes. So one thing I aim to do in lockdown is to cook the most colourful meals I can, as many colours in there to make sure I feel like I'm back in Tea Sutra enjoying a smokey tea and my 'oh some gay sh**' playlist.

Merlin Mee
queer creative
@merlmee

I'd recommend going through your clothes! Try new looks, no one else can see so dress exactly how you want, cut your hair, grow out your hair, shave your head. Now really is the time for experimenting! But overall I think take each day at a time, especially if you are supposed to be working from home. I'm learning to accept that some days I'm gonna be anxious and get nothing done and that ok. It's ok to ask for help and be scared or sad. I'm lucky to live with queers so one good thing about lockdown is no has been dead named or misgendered for 2 weeks. At least by being trapped I feel seen. Solidarity to those who aren't in that position, you are seen even if not in your own home.

Ged

TASK!
Make your own ‘oh some gay sh**’ playlist of your favourite feel good jams on youtube or spotify!
Sam Atkinson a.k.a up Dog
Queer colouring in

Illustrations by Sam Atkinson
a.k.a Up Dog- illustrator, designer, photographer, starving artist extraordinaire
Insta: @up.dog.art @updog
Melody’s fabulous secret powers / top tips to help unlock super gender euphoria and pride in your identity, while self isolating*!

At this moment in time, due to living circumstances, some folks may be unable to express their gender or queer identity, dress how they want, or are being misgendered or deadnamed.

If this applies to you, please remember that this won’t last forever. Right now, survival and keeping safe are your top priorities. Queerness is part of you and still valid no matter the clothes you wear, or the hairstyle or body you have. The positives of what the future holds for you is so much greater than the negatives that are here now. The future holds freedom - there will be spaces where you can dress and be yourself, and it holds a bright & beautiful supportive community full of people willing to use your chosen pronouns and name. A community who are all waiting to meet you!

If this doesn’t apply to you - that’s amazing! If you are able, reach out to your friends who may not be in safe spaces, and see if they’re ok. You might be the only affirming pal they have right now.

*Please stick to The Government’s guidelines and advice for taking care of yourself and others. Practice social distancing, meaning staying in doors as much as you can and keep wash wash washing your hands ! !

Why not try singing the chorus to the queer anthem ‘A little respect’ by Erasure everytime you wash? (It’s the best song ever).

**Disclaimer! I am not a medical expert or doctor. I’m just a trans/non-binary human who struggles with gender dysphoria from time to time. These are just some tips I’ve practiced or have seen other friends use to help feel better about ourselves during this tough time.

Without further ado, here are some of my top tips & activities that can help you celebrate and think about your identity in private!

Superstar DJs... here we go!
**GET DRESSED!**

On a morning, afternoon, nighttime - anytime! Even if you’re not doing anything. Just get dressed up. Wear clothes that make you feel GOOD. Wear fancy dress?! Getting dressed can help you get back into a routine if you want one, and can make you feel more awake and ready for the day. It really helps me to feel less of a slouchy potato in pyjamas, but that of course is OK and good for some days! But also don’t forget to keep clean and bathe / shower. Even though gender is a construct and adverts just try to make us buy things... I find that wearing perfumes, scents, deodorants or shower gels that are affirming to my identity help me to feel good during the day (and smell grrrreat!)

**BUILD YOUR ONLINE DIGITAL COMMUNITY!**

If like me you are big time missing the social aspects of life, you could take this time to build your online support networks and community. I make sure that my social media is full of inspirational people and accounts that make me feel good and positive. Remember it’s still really important to stay safe online and there are mute & block buttons!!

You can follow each of my queer icons social medias mentioned in Stay home stay queer, and start building or adding to a queer digital community of your own!

Here are some LGBTQIA+ Insta accounts that I find inspiring:

@drgacollective  
@scotteelsfat  
@travisalabanza  
@edaliaday  
@badglenby  
@houseoflove_ne
Whenever you feel good, look nice, cosplaying, in drag, trying out make-up, have a new haircut/style, or when you look like you! Remember that you are gorgeous/handsome and just god-damn awesome no matter what. When you’re feeling down you can look back over them, print them out or draw on them! Think of it as documenting a future queer icon who got through the most freaky of times... you!

Check out this amazing photographer Phyllis Christopher who has been documenting LGBTQIA+ visibility for over 20 years! phyllischristopher.com

Try drawing yourself! Or paint, sketch, make an avatar, cut and stick or digitally make you looking like you rocking your identity! Make an awesome background of you at your dream festival, concert or cafe. Cut pictures out from magazines and put your dream outfit together. Anyone can make art no matter what your background is, and this is a really good tool to explore how you see yourself in your head!

There is a fabulous new website called creativewaves.uk which is encouraging anyone (You, your parents / carers, your grandma or pet hamster) to get creative and respond to their experiences of the current situation. You can submit your art to feature on their website!

Get your thoughts and feelings out on paper. Write about your identity, what makes you, you. What’s missing or what’s helping. If it’s negative stuff, you can scrumple it up and flush it down the toilet. If it’s nice or positive things, keep it! Make it into a story, put it in a journal or diary, find your favourite bits and make it into a poster. Just get it out of your head and onto paper. You could also write up a routine and put it on your wall, keep track of healthy habits or moods.

(There are a lot of videos on youtube about journaling!)
I don’t know how, but when I started self isolating, I just, like, forgot about music?! I usually listen to music when I’m out walking, travelling or doing something, which is a bit more tricky now. But I have started to try and listen to music at least once everyday, either when I’m in the shower or just in my earphones, as it really helps me to escape and feel good. Sit outside and put some on your best jams. There are a lot of live streamed concerts & musicians happening too so keep your eyes peeled!

Here are my Top 5 MINT LGBTQIA+ BANDS ! ! !
- The Spook School
- Blom
- Against! Me
- Ryan Cassata
- The Worriers
LIP SYNC!

Now I may be biased, but I find lip syncing is one of the most helpful euphoric techniques in the world! Dysphoric about your voice? Try someone else’s voice! You can create a performance, character or persona of any gender, use make-up or face paints if you have them in the house, make DIY costumes and make videos! You could share these with your trusted friends or just have them for you.

Remember you can share any lip sync videos, tik toks, art, zines, photos or resources that you’ve found helpful using #stayhomestayqueer, or HMU on insta @melodygroovysproates and I’ll feature it on my stories!

MOST IMPORTANTLY...REACH OUT!

Please please please reach out to your trusted friends, family, carers, online peeps or mental health services if you’re struggling. No-one should have to face problems on their own. Please check out the page of helpful links I have researched on the next page!
SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH DURING SOCIAL ISOLATION FROM YOUR NON-BINARY PAL MELODY

Don’t be ashamed to ask for help during this time. Everyone is struggling, but making sure you’re OK is the top no 1 priority in the whole wide world. You’re important, valid and loved. We will get through this together, and there are people out there who will help you through this.

Mental health and well being support:
Mind https://www.mind.org.uk/
Childline https://www.childline.org.uk/
Talking changes https://www.talkingchanges.org.uk/
The Mix https://www.themix.org.uk/
Streetwise (Newcastle) https://www.streetwisenorth.org.uk/
Samaritans https://www.samaritans.org/

LGBTQIA+ helplines / resources:
LGBT Support from Mind https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/lgbtq-mental-health/#.XQkGDbxKg2w
LGBT Switchboard https://switchboard.lgbt/
LGBT Foundation https://lgbt.foundation/
Mermaids https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/
Transbareall https://transbareall.co.uk/home
Gendered Intellience http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/trans-community/resources
Curious https://curiousarts.org.uk/
Manchester Pride https://www.manchesterpride.com/blog/helplines-and-support-for-lgbtq+-communities-during-isolation
Mermaids https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/news/coming-together-when-were-apart/

*Important note for people who wear binders* PLEASE BE CAREFUL BINDING! As always, do not wear beyond the recommended 8 hours, make sure you have breaks, or try using alternatives like sports bras or layering clothes. DO NOT USE ACE BANDAGES as they will damage your skin and ribs. Only wear binders which are from trans specific websites like GC2B or Spektrum Outfitters- not one’s from amazon or ebay. It is also worth checking out this instagram post regarding binding and the virus: https://www.instagram.com/p/B9wvhDKhTMy/?igshid=1w4lsukq04xmu

Resources for self isolating & social distancing for LGBTQIA+ individuals:
Them (Great website with tips and strategies for all genders) https://www.them.us/story/9-strategies-for-quarantining-in-a-non-lgbtq-accepting-environment
Your Holiday mom (Lovely site for individuals living in non-accepting homes) https://yourholidaymom.com/support-during-social-distancing/
Pink News (Full of positive LGBTQIA+ news!) https://www.pinknews.co.uk/
Free online activities http://dothinkshare.com/creative-inspiration/create-to-connect/
Online boredom busting resources https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home
More pokemon origami... Paperpokes http://www.papercokes.ca/gen1.html
Edinburgh zoo live panda cam https://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/webcams/panda-cam/
And finally... This vine which will be a mood for everyone staying in doors! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eZyspecXJE

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PS... A SPECIAL TREAT!
Attached at the end of this zine is ANOTHER mini zine! This is a colourful little book of happiness I made with some pritstick and feltips, featuring key messages from each of my queer icons! Print it out and watch this video on how to make it, or make your own!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ixqr9e3wCxl
"Putting on a show is the ultimate therapy."

- Meridith Peak

"It's ok to be scared."

- Zoe Murray

"Your queerness is powerful."

- Meridith Peak

"You have power over it."

- Zoe Murray

"Your queerness is yours!
And your queerness will go on."

- Zoe Murray

"We have always existed as you more than ever."

- Zoe Murray

"The world grows back it'll need the most significant people as marginal once cos once"

- Zoe Murray

"And binary doesn't break."n

- Zoe Murray

"# StayHomeStayQueer # Queer radio"
With thanks to… iAMi creative, Updog art aka Sam Atkinson, Curious Arts, The Arts council England, Sail Creative, Lee Mattinson, Ellie Lowther, Janwillem Van Den Bosch, Merlin Mee, Zoë Murtagh, Ged, Phil Douglas, dandyscopic (JG Tansley), The Culture Vulture, Rosa Postlethwaite and the lovely Lewis (who came up with the title!)

And not forgetting…. Thank YOU! Without you, this resource wouldn’t exist. So thank you so much for taking the time to read, interact and take part.

We are all here, rooting for you. We will get through this, together.

#stayhomestayqueer will have more projects interactive / community projects on the way... including online craft workshops, watch parties, lives and more... stay tuned!!