SNS Experiences

1. Novice Stage

A. Realisation

First explored their queer identity on SNS	First explored their queer identity on dating apps	Observing queer people on SNS helped them realise / legitimise their queerness	Feeling less alone seeing all the people out there	Aspired to the lives of people they were following
“YouTube was the first place where I kind of like explored same sex relationships mainly… when I was 19… I was a lot older but it was only then I kind of started like discovering it.” “and that was where I probably started, like, discovery, and this would have been all before I ever told people like it was just me and my phone like, and I would have started that property on YouTube.” “Tumblr as well. And that was all completely anonymous. Like I didn't have any friends on like, where other social media I would have had used with friends and stuff. Whereas Tumblr was just me like it was anonymous.” “YouTube was like, lurking like YouTube was like fake formation, because I would not actually communicate with anyone on YouTube.” “Tumblr was like a really good one where you can kind of, like, observe other people, you were talking about you, like, you, you see how other people shape their core identity and how they use that.”	“because I was coming more to terms definitely, to terms with who I was. So I guess it helped form that… kind of got you used to having weird little introductory” “as opposed to the learning about my actual self on Grindr.” “I remember downloading it and then like, like, I just find that like, so unhealthy a relationship with yourself when you're discovering like, one of the most important aspects of yourself, like, oh, I need to put this photo up… figuring out what men I was interested in. Like, now that I think about the guys I'm into, and what I like doing sexually is completely different. And really recently, I thought like, like, I shouldn't have been doing a lot of the stuff I did. Yeah, like that.” “I highlighted like Grindr just because I sort of feel like yeah, I can't pinpoint exactly what I have learned from Grindr and stuff, but I'm sure that I have, especially when I was younger. And like, obviously, I did have early sexual experiences because of Grindr, and not earlier than weirdly early but early. Yeah. But and I suppose I suppose I feel like Grindr is really crucial, because it facilitates that like, and that kind of like, desperation to share the innocence that you have early on.” “I was quite like shocked by how prominent just like your body is”	“Yeah, I guess it has made me feel more comfortable in not being so feminine all the time. I do feel it's a lot of pressure to wear heels and a dress. Because so many of my straight friends are just like it's so dressed up all the time. And I know seeing other people who aren't is reaffirming.” “I never really knew of a couple or hung around with a couple of lesbians or anything like that. And I think if I did, I would have realised my sexuality like a lot earlier. But I think I wasn't exposed to it. And yeah, I guess I always felt different growing up, but I could never pinpoint it until I saw in front of me.” “Tumblr was like a really good one where you can kind of, like, observe other people, they were you were talking about you, like, you, you see how other people shape their core identity and how they use that.” “just like, and watching videos on YouTube, and like, seeing other people acting that way made it more accessible.” “I feel like my core identity has been based off other people's core identities.” “my identity as a musical artist very much. Very much put forwards. Something that I suppose can be described as queer or, yeah, I've been gender fluid. So it was a tool for me to maybe externalise that aspect of my artistic persona” “I mean, the fact that it's, I think it's also it does, of course, it does, it shapes, how it gives legitimacy to be who we are, because we see other people on, on social media, being very free about who they are, even to a point where we're, you know, jealous of these people who are very free to be to be who they are. So yeah, of course, it gives a certain legitimacy.”	“after that, then I started going on, like YouTube and on Tumblr and stuff, it made me feel like, okay, there's loads of people out there. It's not just me. And I think then that definitely affected me then in my real life, because it made me feel less abnormal, like it just made it feel like more of a normal thing. And I was like, there's all these people out there. And I think that definitely helped and made me feel I guess, less alone.” “made you feel more comfortable with the state of the world because you could see that other people were categorising themselves as other things.” “connecting with people and realising you're not a bit of an odd job. Compared to everybody else. There's loads of people like you. Yeah. So yeah. did that affect my personality? I think it maybe helps with my confidence.” “the creator of Grindr describes why he created Grindr. No, it's a really interesting, it's kind of beautiful. where he talks about like, being gay, in like a crowded room and like looking around and wondering who else could be gay? Yeah, feeling so lonely. But like with this app, even though it's so hyper-sexualized, and yeah, blah, blah, whatever. The original idea is, like, you turn on this app, and you know, who's gay around you and you feel less lonely? Yeah. Like, I felt that immensely. Like the first time I got a smartphone. Like I grew up. I didn't I'd never seen a gay person ever until I was like, I remember like, going to a gay club, like, sneaking up on the train to the city with my friend and like, it's if they blew my mind, like, I'd never seen so many gay people. And then like, it's it was the same feeling when like, you download Grindr and you like, little, everything around you. It's me, like, even like where I live now. Like, I turned on Grindr. There's like 50 gay people on my street. Yeah. Even Yeah, even though it's sexualized is still it's still nice.”	“there were all these people that you'd like idolise nearly and they made it seem so normal. “ “So it wasn't that people fancied lesbians on YouTube and were watching to fancy them it was to see a couple succeed.” “in the earlier days when I was younger, and Twitter was a much smaller space, and I definitely think it was a window into like, I was probably following, like, as opposed to celebrities, I was following real life Irish people who are maybe five years older than me, so it was kind of like, an immediate window into my, like, very near future. Yeah, and, which was, like, I didn't realise at the time, but looking back now, I'd say that was probably quite like, shaped lots of decisions that I made in terms of places I wanted to go or, you know, I don't know, like college decisions or stuff like that.” “Facebook came along and Then I guess that was like my first version of I'm, like, kind of used as grinder because I'd like go through like people's pictures and be like, he's that person and then be tagged and then you try and find who they were. And then seeing like, people that have moved to Dublin, that were like, cousins or friends, older brothers and sisters that were now in college in Dublin… seeing their night out photos, and then who were the people tagged in their photos, and then getting to see gay people living in Dublin was really exciting.”

B. Interaction

C. Synthesis

First interacted with queer people on SNS	First interacted with queer people on dating apps	Learnt codes of behaviour	SNS gave them the groundwork to ‘transition’ into real life	Determining what success should look like for a queer person
“the whole discovery phase, there were chat rooms from when I was like 15” “you talking to people like yourself? For the first time ever? Like? Yeah, I think that's how you figure it out who you are. This was like 14 years ago. Now? Yeah, 14 years ago. It's like, yeah, like, this is where, like, digging into everything. And the only way to talk to people was through chat rooms.” “when I was probably like 12/13, I spent a lot of time on message boards and watching, like TV shows. And, and like I said, then like, you would spend too much time on those on the threads to do with the show, but then who would often then just be like general chat threads.” “And I guess they were kind of like my first gay friends in some ways. Because they, like we talked when I think back like so intimately in some way for hours, like we would stay up all night.” “chat rooms were quite a big thing in terms of kind of getting getting to know other gay people.” “I found myself on this chat sites and you could enter different rooms to talk about different topics. And there's lots of different forums as well that people post on. And I was 13. And I didn't know if I was gay or not, but I definitely had an inkling. And I had never spoken to any gay person. And there wasn't really much representation of queer gay people, anything other than metros in my kind of world at the time.”	“the only people you're talking to were the ones you're getting with.” “being from like, Wexford. Like, I was one of the implications right here. Yeah. Like it was not until maybe fourth year people started coming out. So like, I mean, Grindr.” “Like, it's not like I'm going out meeting friends of friends who are gay, and you're like, a natural, healthy, we're like, start something, even if it's just sex.” “but then something like, something like Grindr, you kind of like, try that out for yourself. And you're actually talking to people and you kind of, even if you don't meet people, you're still kind of.”	“and seeing people act that way. I mean, all behaviour is emulated… Anyway, you know, like you just see someone else do something. That's why you do it. But it's almost encouraged me to act that way. Yeah. Because I'm like, Oh, this is how gay people. Yeah, as opposed to me just being me.” “Like, people don't talk if you were actually trying to be yourself on Tinder, you wouldn't be taken seriously.” “I would have learned loads of like, like, gay slang and gay terms from watching, watching things on YouTube. And like, yeah, like Facebook stuff.” “I use a lot more when I was younger, like he asked me and all those things. Like, I would definitely do that with my friends when I was younger, but now I'm like, No, I don't need to talk. I thought, yeah, like, we gotta like, your gay friends. like that all the time. Because I was just doing because everyone else around me.” "I think with Grindr it doesn’t take long to assume these of codes of communication that exist on that app. So like, you know, I don't know, it is it is like, a whole education.” “And I do often when I have used Grindr, like I sometimes I'm quite conscious that I am like, not being myself. In a way. I'm just like, especially if you're dealing with someone you're like, I think this person is going to find it easiest to deal with to meet me on this level.” “I think all the codes of you know, this is my preference, this is not my preference and it just becomes quite quickly normalised.” “Some of these conversations, I'm sure, like, could be a blueprint for like, how conversation goes” “There's a vernacular that we probably wouldn't have access to if we didn't have the internet. And so we I think we adopted American isms and how we speak about it. And but that can also I think, the negative thing, because then we can perpetuate the stereotype” “even Tinder, like, just the way that it's like, formatted and like showing, like, you go on Hinge and you're not gonna like be like, hey, you want to fuck?”	“I still didn't feel comfortable kind of saying it to people until I started to meet people in my own circle.” “I was like, Okay, I'm gonna start going on Tinder, I'm gonna do this. But um, I think I wouldn't have been able to even to do that if I didn't have the groundwork that like, YouTube gave me” “it helped me to form ideas and understand experiences such as coming out like, I remember watching coming out videos like, Oh my god, I need to know what this is. Yeah, I had a plan for coming out” “probably around the age of 15. So it's like, I stopped using those platforms. Also, because I didn't really need them anymore. And because I had essentially come out and like, was living a completely out life. Oh, it just didn't. They didn't I didn't really need them anymore, I suppose.” “And it actually also kind of segued into real life in a way in the sense that I've actually met someone I was with for quite a long time through this online platform on sort of social media platform.” “when I came out, there wasn't so much of an emphasis, or there wasn't so much of a need to be on, on those kind of which be so consumed or involved in, like, the online side of things.”	“that that person is a gay person who's winning” “I think it's difficult to carve out dangerous to look at Instagram to try and inform your identity too much because most of what is success to you is like no.” “There's a certain body type that's promoted and pushed within the gay community.” “I feel like I have to present myself a certain way. I have to both like, just feel some sort of, like validation from men.” “I think Instagram definitely played like a big part. And yeah, just it just feels like it just constantly feeds into your identity.” "you like notice that you're that it does have community that you're like, yeah, I'm joining there is like a very, like, strong central, prominent image, which like, I think, well, for most gay people, this grid” “I think it definitely has changed the way I actually even approach like certain life situations, because now I think to myself, but even when I do a job, and even when I'm working now, because you have to think about it, you have to be proactive about it, like exposure on my Instagram exposure on my social media, but also like, I also think that's, that's like, the toxic because what you give out on your Instagram, your social media is not what is there in real life. And I actually think that ties in very well with queer identity, because you you have this kind of bar of the image that you have to like attain”

2. Competent Stage

A. Exploration				
Wider range of possibilities for identity / experimentation	(Seeking) more realistic representations of themselves	(Seeking) a sense of community	Learning about others in the LGBTQ+ community	Exposure to more variety meant more openness to others
“It allowed me to connect with my more, more feminine aspects in my personality, just seeing other people that are that are doing it as well, I think.” “Instagram is now kind of almost like, a whole second identity on Instagram.” “I think I think Instagram is more like a sort of the source seemed to be a maybe like, a slightly more creative space for me, or sort of promotional creative link to my work, or I guess, you know, it was some sometimes aspirational” “I think I think there's also something to be said about, like, specifically Instagram about it, allowing me specifically anything, in general to kind of to be to be a bit more feminine.” “I'm glad that Grindr is exposing you to all these different kind of viewpoints and things so it's helping me be okay with myself. I guess I've got a bit of like that Catholic shame thing to shake off. We all do. And give more I think that's kind of cool.” “And then yeah, so you just want people who you thought were really cool, who wanted to be like, you know?” “I've never felt comfortable with my boobs, because they're really big. So I seen that you can get stressed and down but like, make them smaller. And you in a way that's not really. Like, it's not a trans issue for me, but it's just like, it's like, it's just, I feel like some days, some days, I don't like them some days… And I'm like, yeah I’ll hide them. And so I guess I've seen online that you can just do that. And it doesn't have to be like I'm trans, you know. And so that's enabled me to embrace. You can just do that. And that's it like, because I do feel slightly more masculine somedays. But I don't identify as a male, I could identify as a female if you know what I mean. It's just a presentation thing. It's not a gender identity thing.”	“I also find myself like, really interested in couples that have a similar dynamic to me and C, where like, there's more tomboyish one, and there's, like more girly one.” “it exposes you just to, to so many different types of people and body… just Grindr, I would also like it, do it growing up and getting older, and maybe not caring about things as much but like, I sort of feel like hot like parts of my body that I used to hate when I was younger, I've almost learned to like, romanticise them now, because you see so many different, like, things that people are actually specifically looking for on Grindr, but you're kind of like things that I would have used, like, like, like body hair stuff, you know, that, like, my previous position when I was 16 was that I was like, Oh, that's kind of gross, whereas, and I'm so I would hate it on another guy. And I would also hate it on myself. Whereas now I feel like one will come full circle where I'm like, Oh, well, I mean, there's guys that are literally specifically looking for that. Maybe I don't hate my body hair. Yeah, maybe actually quite like it.” “So I guess like, yeah, it's, it's a bit different, but it's definitely tool that, like, I'm very much inspired by things that I see on Instagram. And that also includes, you know, certain ways in which like, queer identity is being represented and so I yeah, it's still I'm still Yeah, it still informs the way I think about these things to some extent.” "The only examples I have are on YouTube. Yes, no lesbians running around, like pregnant in my area.” “YouTube is really good. Because it documents things like my partner is looking on YouTube. Now there's a lesbian couples who are documenting their parenting journey. Because nobody talks about it, like, there's no resources about it, there are there are but like, then you have to search around to find them. And so you get the single narrative of one person's story.” “And there is a part of my queer identity that I have found on Instagram influences coffee, you know, Gannon Doyle, who wrote contained Should I know this author called No, no, this is also called diamond door and	“it's the closest I come to like the queer space like. So YouTube is totally for queer identity formation rather than vs. Instagram.” “YouTube like that, I find that that's more and more comforting. Yeah. I mean, because you can you hear all these people talking about their own experiences.” “I honestly was so bad into it, like to the point like my, my second year of summer, like I remember my mom, like my mom coming to my room and being like, Don't you want to go out and meet people? I'm like, I've everything that I need right here.” “Yeah, so it was there's definitely I think with Instagram, there's definitely a sense of like, networking with other queer queer slash gay people, and kind of creating this small community.”	“Because like, it started off me trying to learn about myself. And it ended up me learning about all these subsections or like people that started off as lesbians transitioning, I'm now into a whole other educational forum that I would never have been in if I didn't go on YouTube.” “YouTube, I find much more interactive. So I actually follow like loads of like gay people. trans people and I glued loads people on YouTube, but I find it really educational. I've definitely learned an awful lot about identity in general on YouTube” “the only one that I feel like I have educated myself from is YouTube.” “like the words I use and the things I say, if we're going to take that into behaviour. Yeah, it's heavily influenced by and what I experienced from social media, like, the correct terms and all these things that you're supposed to use for things.”	“I think that like being gay, gives you an insight into being a minority, like I can feel more strongly about every other social problem for older minorities.” “every group of people have their own their own dictionary that they use, you know, like, trans people have so many different words for like, and how they describe themselves, and they describe other people, how they talk about trends” “I also didn't just learn about gay like experiences trans and lesbian relationships as well. Just like how their lives are” “Like, I've talked to people on Grindr, I would never have talked to you. Yeah. I've ever talked to these people. of Grindr. Yeah. And it just, it opens you up. I think it should. I don't think it does. But I think it should make us more like empathetic and, like open to other people.”

	she wrote and Tango parent has assigned just a record arguments that they have with each other. And it's so funny. Like, you know, the brief fucking annoying stuff that your girlfriend doesn't Yeah, like you just just so annoying. And then, like, she had this argument, and she was like, Well, I think we just, you know, that's what marriage is you fight about the same thing over petty arguments” “So we're constantly searching for people who talk about them. Because it just seems to be this culture of like, silence.”			
Entertainment imbued with queer culture				
“like for instance, like drag queens. I watch a lot of the videos of them just doing random shit like Trixie and cartoons videos like I find them they always talk about gay identity and stuff like that as well.” “we all love gay TikTok” “My Space is really cool because you could follow bands and, and there was always like, and then just always a lot of queer people I felt on MySpace.” “Maybe it was just me, but like, I never really engaged with people on this platform. It was more like, kind of like, Yeah, but like, you would follow queer artists. Like, like, for instance, like photographers, or like drawers”				
B. Engagement				
Making friends on SNS	Making friends on dating apps	Connecting with people you wouldn’t normally meet	Self-organising in groups	Signalling queerness
“eventually, he would kind of like, essentially, you would make friends on them.” “I was about to say that I'm not necessarily using like social media to to know, to to find new friends, but it's actually not come to think about it. I do meet a lot of new people through Instagram” “I think meetup is a really powerful networking site. Yeah. It connects you really easily with like minded people.” “gay girlfriends I have in London was from a random meet up event. Yeah. And then we've just stayed friends for like years.” “I think before the all of these like social media, kind of apps	“Like I remember was my friend Lydia, like, I found her through Tinder. But said from the get go, that we were never going to be romantic thing or never get together.” “made a friend through Grindr when I was in Australia, and he had a really, really queer friends circle. And that's when I fell in love with drag and I used to go to drag nights with him. So that was one really positive, I made friends and made a lot of friends through Grindr.” “I have met some some really cool people through a lot of friends. It's been really helpful for like travelling. when travelling alone, just get like, meet people and go for drinks and make friends pretty easily.”	“meeting other people that you wouldn't normally get to meet” “think there was something about the fact that this medium didn't, it was very textural, like it was all about just exchanging like, you know, texting each other without having any images that made it. There was more room for having more profound conversations with people you don't necessarily know.” “you can log on to Facebook, and you can see, like, an interview with like a black trans person in New York, and you're like, I've never would have met this person in my life.”	“whatsapp was such a strange one. Because like, it allows you to create in groups, you know, you can call yourself a certain name, and certain people are in that group. And it's all about that safe space of queerness.” "So MSN, I guess would have influenced my queer identity in the sense that I, I went to school with a lot of very words to inform the environment, there was very queer friendly for females and males. And we would speak to each other after school on MSN, and that would have waned for a acceptability and we were just, it was a platform to discuss things outside of school.” “And then I guess these other ones too, like, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook,	"I probably use social media as a way to like let people know I was gay but without explicitly coming out, but I like it was so much handier for me sometimes to like have things on social media rather than me having like Coming out.” “on Facebook, when I like say, I started going to like, the dragon and the George promo, just like, I think, war, I would have always made a thing about, like clicking going on the events.” “even like on Instagram, like, like, in my bio, I've got like a rainbow. And I feel like a lot of people that are gay do this as well.” “I definitely remember like, you know, going out of my way to, in that, I like, um, the in like, in

or applications came along. The only way you could really find people is if you went on to like film online forums. So if you find a lesbian film, there would be like online forum. Where you could go and find other people that like the film and then start chatting about it. You started to chat to other light.” “And we're still friends. So that's cute. Yeah, yeah. And so that was really helpful to have something for some people that I could talk to. There's definitely a very scary time because I was living in rural Ireland.”	“when i when i backpacked through Europe, when I was like, 20, like, I would turn on Grindr. Not for like sex, but like to meet people in the city. And I'd be like, like, I'm like, you know, 21, whatever. And I'm gay, and like, Where should I go? And I would never meet these people. But they were just like, tell me what way to go.” “Even like when I first moved to London, it's like, it's like such a universal experience, like moving to a new city. And you know, literally no one and you just have sex” “I managed to find a way to like, turn Grindr into this, like, friend finding app real sick, I would say it's probably better, like, not so much in London, but more like I would like lead in a random European city. And I'd put my little like Australian flag up or whatever. Who knew I spoke English. And then like, I would just talk to people. And I actually made so many friends through that. And like it just like, it didn't have to be sexual. Yeah. You know, it was sexual. But like, I didn't know all of it was sexually.” “I met up with another Australian who was like, several milestones. And like, there was nothing sexual about a meeting at all. We literally were just both alone. We both wanted to go to this guy club. But we didn't we, we were in a foreign city. And we didn't trust any we're like, yo, so we just met up and we like, had dinner. And we're like, oh, we're cool. Like, we can drink together. And we we went out and there wasn't there wasn't like nothing sexual about it. It was just like, we're both gay. How can we help each other and be friends?”		even. You can create your own communities within that that don't have judgement orgay Twitter or whatever.”	your interests, like listening, like, music artists, like the Scissor Sisters, or, like, Christina Aguilera. And like, the understanding at the time that like, I knew that people were going to notice us, and, and that it will be commented on and it absolutely was. And, but I suppose that was like my first platform that I had to, like, express that for better or worse.” “I think before Instagram, my, maybe my, my gain is so my queerness has been, was it as externalised and celebrated and I think because Instagram is, you know, it's completely legit for people to cause you know, countless selfies of themselves or like being shirtless or Just more celebratory of their own bodies, and not necessarily to feel shameful or self absorbed while I was doing so.” “spare room, that's an interesting because I think it's all about but like what I was looking for my first place I put in like the LGBT category” “Probably Instagram was the first ever social media that I was happy and felt comfortable. Putting like, relationship stuff on.” “there used to be this thing where like, you could put like lyrics in your and when you're online, you could have lyrics and what you're listening to, and stuff like that. So the things that you're listening to, and like the lyrics or like, people will pull. And like, I knew a gay couple where it was common to put like, your partner's name in your online status and her and so that would have made it acceptable and like in a in a public sphere”
Playing a mentor role	Everyday activism	Audience management	Engaging with queer culture	
“I was basically like a mama gay, even though two years older, because the wealth of experience in those two years is insane. And I brought on her feet first gay night, I like basically was one of the people that helped her to have a healthier relationship with gay culture, because I think it can be extremely toxic.”	“during the gay marriage referendum, I felt like I had to kind of be very, like, outspoken and stuff about it. And I think a part of me was it was me doing that. So people knew.” “I think it's given me more confidence to speak about topics, like race divide, like, I feel like the black lesbian YouTubers that I follow have taught me so much about my identity as a white lesbian, like, just because I'm a lesbian.” “I've done posts on I think that being gay has made me speak up about other things more on social media.”	“my followers are, like, mostly gay men. So and whereas Facebook is very much family, friends, people that I've known for, like years, very much. The stuff I post on there is more would have been more focused around the like, something that's suitable for them.” “if you're texting someone who you see who they follow, they follow everyone, you know, you talk to someone, oh, I slept with him. You know, I know who he is. And the fact that it's like all there for you to see I find that terrifying. Like I just think it's like it's I mean for me, I know for other people, it just kind of gives them like a weird anxiety, spin. Like, why does everyone know each other?” “but because a lot of the lot of	“impacted, like places that I went, events I attended, which ultimately, you know, as far as what I would have, I would still meet other queer people, or at least bring the queer people that I already know” “one of my friends have been one of these moderately Facebook famous people. Like before I met him, oh, my God, this is so insane. But you know, the phones. And we used to have these things called facebook, facebook meets where like, you'd go to like a place in London or wherever. I remember there being massive ones in Manchester, actually. And like the the man demand tuning days were like, really popular back in those days as well, because that's where like, the sort of two trends and stuff	

		my audience is kind of like, yeah, queer people or gay people. So it was it was definitely like a networking tool for me to reach out for these audiences. And yeah, ultimately, yeah, I think a very big chunk, I think maybe like 80 or 90% of the people that I follow and that follow me fall within the range of queer.” “I won't post necessarily the same things to my friends on Facebook, because it's Yeah, it's just a different different audience that you're addressing and, and Instagram specific, specifically, because, you know, the vast majority of my followers are people that are within that community of people. It feels more legit. To post that kind of. Yeah. More. Yeah, more body, celebratory content” “Facebook is definitely like, it's a lot more like it's a lot more lateral Sunday stuff.” “So do I write like, censored um, but like even like, that kind of translates into online stuff as well. Like for a really long time. I like blocked her from my Instagram stories”	came from and that was really big back in that day. So that's like, my first recollection of queer culture being online, as such.”	

3. Issues

Negative / damaging experience	Discrimination	Self-Image	Sacrificing self-expression for attractiveness	Poorly designed apps / shoehorned into straight apps
“I would consider almost all of them detrimental.” “everyone, just like gave unrealistic, unrealistic goals and unrealistic. just constantly inundating you with unrealistic gay people. very unrealistic people.” “Probably Instagram had a negative one because I was always like, why don't I look like these people? Why am I Why am I doing these things that they're doing? Why can't I? Like I live the life like that that they have. So it actually just filled me with like jealousy, and I didn't like that at all.” “They've only ever been like, this is what you should be doing. This is what you should be liking” “I don't want to have it. I think it's like, I understand the negative impact it has on me. Unlike you, kind of you can just do stuff without thinking or Yeah, send things even without thinking. And like I said, I feel conditioned in air quotes to like, Oh, it's just like, you're gay. You have grindr. Yeah, like, except that you have to have it.” “I suffered a lot with depression	“and then just the algorithm being racist, like the YouTube algorithm being racist, and also homophobic.” “that's not really like that much. Positive, but I can say I have experience from Grindr” “I definitely think I faced way more prejudice on Grindr than I have on any, any other kind of social media platform. That's the whole no fats, no blacks, no Asians, no femmes, that that whole kind of thing. And then I look at myself, and not only am I black, but I'm part Asian, and I'm quite feminine to an extent, you know. So I definitely think that there's like, a certain amount of self loathing that I have faced from using that, because I feel like I have to give out a certain image of who I am on. June, I mean, yeah, I think it's probably like, a like, I approach it with more with more like, trepidation that I approach anything else. And there's definitely like, there's a lot more like stress and like, self degradation.”	“Facebook and Instagram definitely negatively affected my like the thoughts of myself.” “I get like a bit panicked if I'm not wearing like, I don't know if I'm just not like, up to a certain standard around gay people.” “you're met with like, a sea, you know, of torsos. And that's that, to be fair with, like, I think, I don't even know that I would say, this is what I believe where I'd have to be, but obviously, it's part of the experience. So you know, that was probably the first time that like, I really, like overcame, like, like, body conscious in any way. Like, I was just like, I have a body, my male, male body, but like, and that was the first time you're like, Whoa” “I think I definitely will make sure the things I've taken from Grindr, like, it's important to like, your body to look a certain way” “I'd say that like, all the time I spend looking at people's bodies on like, dating apps is, isn't great for my self esteem. I don't have a ripped body. And when you can't see me looking at like rips torsos. You kind of feel like, Oh, I should have that.	“Why do I think like that? Like, who's perceiving it this way? versus how I'm perceiving it one way? I think. I don't know. I really don't know. Like, it just kind of makes you overthink everything.” “you don't want to completely desexualize yourself.” “trying to try to like kind of creating an identity you know, on Instagram that I think it's going to be appealing to you know, and so has to be quite war disaster almost appeal to some of that in a professional sense. You don't want to like be nuts, you know, like the you also kind of want to look attractive.” “I want to enjoy, like, clothing and fashion. But I do want to, I don't want to put off the kind of men that I want to sleep with. You know, I don't want to be like it. So. So it's kind of really, I think that's interesting.”	“yeah. It actually turns me off the lesbian dating scene, because it was such a badly designed app.” “Tinder again, I think it was a bit of a step up on She. Just because it's a lot more. It's much more user friendly. But then again, the downside of that it's designed for straight people.” “but you kind of feel a bit isolated in society because the majority of people are straight. The world revolves around the needs of straight people. I think getting shoehorned into better functioning apps, because they're service traded people. just gives you a reinforcing of being shoehorned.”

when I was younger, and in my early 20s, so there was a lot of time spent looking at other people, especially other gay people that I followed, and their lives and how things are going for them. And trying to compare myself to them a lot of the time.”		So that's not great.”		
4. Needs				
Spaces more appropriate for the interaction / suited to the need	More genuine interaction / not feeling obliged to match the coding of the SNS	More relatable / realistic representation	More local voices	More diverse algorithms
“genuinely Connect young gay people. I think that would be amazing. Yeah, I do. Some gay people do live in countries where they can't be gay. Yeah. So if they could go online and like talk to someone who like I think that would be amazing.” "Like Imagine if there was like, just like an app, you can go on and be like, just like make friends. Like it sounds so silly. But if you're 1516 Yeah, no, like, okay, you have that for Grindr for sex. But what about everything else?” “if you think about, like, teenage discos, yeah. Like, where the setting is. There's nothing that you can have as a gay person under age that gives you anything remotely what they have. Yeah. So if that was sort of like online, or you could like, invite them there or just something Yeah, like, it's gonna take a while to get like to that kind of level. I feel.” “platforms that are specifically for making friends. And just because I feel like you all I always see people on Grindr, that are like, I'm here to make friends. And I'm always here, like, you're in the wrong. This is the platform for that, in my opinion. And if that's what you're here for, like, you're going to be disappointed, you're going to be laughed, like, either disappointed, or like potentially, like upset, because they're probably nine out of 10 times gonna be engaging with someone and maybe like, actually, like, believe that. It was a friendly conversation. And then at some point, you know, I feel like it just always goes down, you know, the price. Yeah, essentially, I'm like, you know, I don't use my Tinder for that purpose. So yeah, you know, it would that wouldn't upset me. But I imagine if you, and if you were genuinely, like, I just want to make some friends in my area. Like, I imagine that would be really frustrating. And I feel like, when you like other apps, you know, like Tinder and Bumble and stuff, I think they	“And I think an element of realism would be nice. I just find that I think most people online are so fake” “on a deeper we're missing honesty, can only get honesty from people. So it's kind of hard to get that.” “the type of representation you would get for gay men is, for the most part, you know, a lot of gay men try to portray themselves on Instagram is like, extremely successful. Obviously, it's like, it's very good looking at it kind of like it's almost as if like, the gay identity, the way it's being portrayed on social media and Instagram in particular, is very kind of intermingled with kind of like this very capitalist or Neo Neo liberal way of like, very individualistic and very materialistic” “like being able to share, you know, sad moments or just being able to show like to be more vulnerable and exposed. And I mean, it's also something that I often feel like in in real life as well” “I used to definitely suppress that. Some of my artistic side and my most my, definitely my more feminine side, more queer side, on social media, I didn't used to be as truthful as I am now. I think that kind of definitely took a massive change, where the whole Black Lives Matter situation became very, very apparent in our culture. And yeah, and I think when the whole lockdown situation happened, and I kind of had a moment where I thought to myself, I was like, I think that I actually need to start, like, being more honest and speaking more openly, about, like, how I feel about life on my social media. Because I feel like this, there's just not enough. out there. Yeah, yeah. I just feel that people don't speak. Like, honestly enough about, like, how they feel how situations make them feel in life”	“the taboo of being gay is so hot that I find myself being drawn to texts, where the protagonist is gay, but there's something dangerous about us. But that's actually really like fucked up because you should, as a gay person drawn to texts that are by being open and everyone accepting you and it not being part of the story” “I think that I really would have benefited from a lot more androgynous characters, like a lot more girls and boys that were gender bending a little bit more.” “Okay, you've now been made a millionaire, through, you know, product placement and, you know, brands collaborating with you, etc. but you actually haven't lived life. Like if I spoke to you about life like you wouldn't actually. Like you wouldn't actually be able to talk to me in an educated fashion.” “I'm conscious of the things that I consume every day. So I will consciously follow like things that you know are outside of the norm because I don't want to I want to get used to see normal bodies and clear identity. “ “I do like a storytelling platform. I'm sure that that exists. But I think through telling our true life stories, people feel that they're not alone that that because because our narrative, our narratives may be different, but our core stories are all the same. And so, so because it happens to me so many times that people People come up to me and say, I can't believe that that happened to you is that, that that's your story, because that's also my story. And that and thus creating a community. Yeah. You know, storytelling is basic. So I think the truth true life stories.”	“I love YouTube, but like the couples that get served to me are like, Canadian, American, they don't they don't seem to have gotten the algorithm right to connect you with the closest gays, like the closest YouTube famous gays like, I would love to see like Irish gay YouTubers. I don't even care if they have 100 views, I'd be more interested in watching them then Canadians that have 100,000 views.” “a lot of them are American and only like, a few years ago, I would watch like, one or two Irish people.”	“I would like a better algorithm on YouTube doesn't work a little bit more of a random algorithms that doesn't only show me what I want. Yeah. I find that very annoying.” “a random algorithm or randomised algorithm to throw me a bone every now and again” “as you become even as you become an outdoors, it's almost like, more, more emphasised that, you know, gay beauty should be very mad. Yeah. Yeah. Or at least that's what you know, that's the loudest voice.”

have these friends equivalence. But I feel like it's like a concept that has really not at all. And that like, like, that hasn't ever been successfully done online. And, and maybe it's because like, with Tinder and Bumble, and with Grindr, as well, a little bit is it's like, it's the idea of like, matching, and it's like, you know, like you when you're when it's when it's in the context of dating, like you are looking kind of for your one match. But when you're making friends, like, that's not usually how you make friends."

"I think definitely for a lot of free people and this does include, you know, non binary and trans people who use Grindr and stuff like that. I think there's a massive leap from something like Instagram. I know people do pick up on it. Stuff like that. But I think there's a massive leap something like Instagram, to the identity that you present on Grindr"

"Grindr is probably the dominant social media, specifically for, I guess, a capsule quitting, but it is, it's not a particularly friendly place. Whereas Instagram, and then you've got Instagram, which is almost like, it's not, you know, Instagram is so huge, that I don't think it's going to be considered a sort of, I wouldn't say some pretty sexually open, you know, platform, you're not allowed to post pictures of a woman's nipples for years, you're not allowed to pose any kind of sexual content. So it's almost like we're told that's really the life, you know, the nice like, queer person."

"I always get so sad whenever I go back home. And I'm on Grindr and there's literally, I'm the only square with a face for miles. Like Yeah, and see as far as like Sligo and Denis rising, and my queer can go like, most of the time, and a handful of faces. And it always, really gets me down with the Congress. Like, there's a lot of like, say, when I was home this year, I was living with my granny so I wasn't meeting up with anyone. I was just there to just like, pass the time chat. But the conversation is always like the exact same things like how you send pick top or bottom, like, come on, like just, let's have a conversation."

"Like being like, 1716 on ManHunt, talking to like, 50 year old farmers who like, you know, yeah, whatever. It's like, that was not appropriate. And like looking back now, I'm like, that guy should be in jail."

"Yeah, that's what was missing from these apps is like a non sexual element. Yeah. Which is

"there's this massive pretence or like this massive pressure to prove to people that were good 24 seven. And that's just not the way that life works, Jiminy, like, back in the day, Facebook, famous days, I call them, we all knew we were messes. The fun thing, that's what the fun thing was about was about it is that everyone knew that we were like, a bit fatter than we were a bit crazy that we're a bit different, especially like the queer ones. And we all knew that we were like the outcasts of like, of like our schools before, of like, the social bubbles that we were in, we all knew we were like, the weird lines, whatever. And so I feel like there was like, so much more fun in it that way. Whereas now I just feel like we're all trying to keep up this pretence that even though we, we might be in this certain language, like the best at that, or the best of this, when, in actual fact, like, I actually think that there's way more liberation actually, just like, not trying to be that"

"you fill out the profile, and you're like, what are your deepest secrets? Yeah, like the way that is set up. It's set up to like, guide you towards dating. Mm hmm. If you could do the same thing with friendship."

tricky. Because when you're talking about queer identities, so sexual, yeah, that literally is what it is. Yeah. Except it's not there's like so much more. Yeah, that we have in common with each other. That's beyond just Yeah, yeah. sex."				
Not having to search for queer content	Ways to make like-minded friends	Better regulation for SNS		
"on Instagram, or on Twitter, it just comes up in your feed and you just see it, it's more of like, something I have to go search for because it's just coming up." "And I end up on all these random forums that like, you, again, but then, you know, you could always you wouldn't even know what the website was, but it would be based on some sort of clear search." "So often I think like, the flaw with like, the user experience isn't necessarily like tied to the platform. And it's like, you know, obviously, it's down to like, who you're following, essentially, and you can completely change your experience." "Am I detecting lesbian undertones here? That's where you'd go find a little film online forum." "being able to find things easier, and being able to then find your tribe based on that kind of thing. Which I guess is kind of like, algorithms do that for you now. Like, your discover feed on Instagram will kind of show you what it thinks you should what else you should would like or should follow. Based on your interaction, so yeah, that's I think that's really important. Like suggestions, it's very often don't know what to look for."	"It's like if, like, if you give if you're given the opportunity to, like categorise yourself as gay or like, say that you feel like you are like a certain gender that there should be like an associated like, like, like forum or support group or some company that goes in deeper rather than" "Like, if you don't have friends in the city, who are into the same thing is you? It's really hard to kind of like, find where is the club that I would like? Or where is where is a good place to hang out to find like minded people. Like a lot of the times you're very, you're kind of like dependent on your network, or he's around you. Like, you're they when I moved here, I was just had my London work friends. And I'm now there's another gay guy, two gay guys, but like, one's very like preppy. And, and the other ones like, very quiet. So neither then would have been going to the places or the clubs that I would want to go to. So I would have been kind of like a loss if it weren't for having like failover Kilian, to introducing to other people, you know, and so, yeah, better way of discovering things that you're interested around you, um, outside of your network outside of your network here." "especially in London, because the number one thing that people say in London is like, I'm still learning like, you don't have enough friends. And it's so hard to make friends."	"there was always a moderator in the chat rings. Yeah. And they kind of like, kept everybody on the straight and narrow. And then once you felt like, comfortable enough, you could go off then and have your own private conversation with somebody. So yeah, but like, can't be like having moderators these days. Who's gonna babysit the baby gays?" "I would immediately say, like $1 billion into the regulation of Facebook and Instagram, because there's just so much in there and it's so damaging to me that it's all five checks. Yeah. Just and social media conglomerates being responsible for was on their booking. Yeah, it's in their platforms. It's just literally literally flip flopping is out there. Like, I came across something the other day, and there was like pictures of dead bodies. And it was to do with like to do with them, like radical Islam and stuff. It's not that has anything to do with your identity, but it just shows that there's like, you can just post whatever you want. You need to have it within with the election now. Like you can see, people are clicking on things on Facebook, that nonsense and believing that, you know, it's okay to you know, deny trans people who are trans healthcare and stuff like that, that overwhelmingly by like, tenfold, it would be regulation of content"		

Non-SNS Experiences

Representation helped them realise / legitimise their queerness	Exposure to diverse characters led to more diverse sexuality / identity	Media imbued with queerness (indirectly)	Seeing queer people in relatable settings	Older friends allowed them to see a future life

“I feel like The L Word was massive and forming my identity. It's just like, a lesbian show. And, and like was the only one I found a boyish girl.” “That the gay representation, although being very stereotypical in the show, that was one of the only things that I could see, dad and Queer as Folk. Yeah, as the British version and the American version. And Will and Grace. Yeah. All of them were, like, kind of stereotypical representation. But at least it was something.” “reality TV. And as opposed to TV, just because I suppose like, it is, like, it offered like, again, early, and like continues to offer real life and presentation of like, real gay people that might come from, like, background similar to yours, or just, you know, that it's like that it's not scripted, and that it's not like, and I suppose it shows you also like really, like flawed” “I guess like reality television, because it's actually like, allowed me to see that people from backgrounds that night actually. I'm glad it's privileged backgrounds. I grew up in a very, very working class environments, and, like, make something out of themselves and become like really successful. One of my main Whereas the TV programme five watches the Real Housewives of Atlanta. And that there are a few of them on there that have come from like, really, really like, poor like backgrounds. And, and they've worked really hard and like, made their way up into into like, the hierarchy of like social circles and stuff.” “Ugly, Betty was a massive, massive for me growing up because it was the first television series I ever saw where they had queer characters be like, openly celebrated for like, like the character traits, like being sassy and like being fabulous and stuff like, Mark when we miss po in puberty was like, he was like that, like seeing that character on television was massive for me. Because I was like, yeah, here's here's a guy who's like sassy and loves fashion” “But there's the Real L Word and that's like the reality of that and reality TV. Some of the stats from that. I cannot wait her now. But when she was	“Yeah, I'm, I'm a lesbian, but I would like I'm a lesbian that would date a trans girl who's lesbian?” “it shows you that you can be kind of like that they're they're quite like tough characters, but they're still very feminine. And that's like a crucial part of their identity. And being very feminine, while also being like quite tough, and, and sharp.”	“Gaga ! I don't know like was listening to her when I was like nine Yeah. Like a thing I say all the time it's like I'd be in the car my mom listening to disco stick. Yeah, like nine” “Books are a big thing. There's like, also Panti Bliss. Yeah, I read her book” “Drag Race is like really taught me that. Makes me feel comfortable” “Christina Aguilera has, and stuff like that, where there was a lot of queer people interacting in them again, it made it like, it made it cool. And I think and which I funny, like, how, like, like, almost, like, helped my confidence, I suppose.”	“university was, like, a more like, liberal place where I think that was the first time I should have encountered people who I saw who were openly gay or queer, or trans, whatever, but we're living sort of, had sort of had a, like a habits of social capital and stuff, and they didn't seem to be, you know, suffering, because they're all like, you know, kind of stigmatised or oppressed because that because of that, because of their sexuality” “Well, I made a video about three years ago, three and a half years ago, about the things that people say, to me as a person in a same sex relationship, you know, the weird things I've heard, and it took a lot of courage for me, because it was coming out, I was coming out big time. Yeah, this song, like, so everybody was gonna hear it, and everybody was going to know about it. And I wanted people to see that there's a different type of queerness that there's all sorts of queer. And that you can be all kinds of people in one.”	“she was, like, you know, older living like a life in her 20s when I was a teenager, so, like, her life, and her lifestyle was something about like, definitely, like, influenced me, she, she is frayed, but like, had gay friends and stuff like that, you know, so. And that is a, that's Yeah, I would be like an early identifier of like, all of that in my life.” “older, striped, female friends that I had, and who I got and like were like, they were a little bit further on in life, their lifestyle was a little bit different to mine. I was their younger friend. And they were out of probably, they like they were out of school. So they were like, Lino socialised in a way where it was, like, much more normal and actually, like, quite cool. To be gay.”

with her ex girlfriend, she was like, she just needs hair besides just looking drain or beside the thing all the time to finish there. Why doesn't she like so tiny little things like that again? And she's also talking about, because I'm like, 29 so I'm not 10 years, maybe I have kids. So she's talking about about having children and like the reality of it"				
Clubs	Late adolescence	Taking the leap into queer life means disconnecting from straight life	Signalling in the real world (learnt from SNS experience)	
"Like the times when I would go to like promo and stuff like college years, but I would say the gay nights would have been more resource" "nightlife, and drugs, and as like a connected thing, like, you know, a combo as a combo. Yeah, I think like, I would be naive. If I didn't write that I thought part of my life, it was like, hugely influential to shaping my identity I have today" "Definitely had my share of going to clubs and parties over the last decade or so." "it's a queer venue, but at the same time, it's it's very straight, friendly. So yeah, it's it's an interesting example of like, I used to hang out there like loads with like, straight people in facade, just that I think it presents an interesting case of the borderline between being gay and just being hipster or yuppie or whatever is very, like blurred."	"Because basically, you're having your adolescence at a much quicker pace, much older in life as a gay person, like you're going through those teenage years in your 20s" "I don't know if people have mentioned this before but I'm convinced gaping have their own gay adolescence. Yeah, in their 20s Yeah, they like I know I've met so many guys that are like 28 either under dickheads I have no idea what like the effect their actions have on you. What like sex means to you what it means to them." "sort of that adolescence period like to have a little bit later and much quicker. And faster."	"just towards the end of college and kind of made the conscious decision to actually just like completely, essentially stop going out really to like, the kind of straight faces that I was going to see with my friends that actually just sort of like, made the decision at the end of second year that I was like, I'm just actually not bothered doing this anymore. I feel like I've done it, I've gotten what I can, from that I made the conscious decision to just do the a thing a bit more in terms of going ice. And life, my life was better because of that." "Like, that's like a thing that straight people have they have these high school friends forever. And I have one high school friend. And I mean, like, no, but like, I had friends in high school. But like, you kind of you grow up and you change and like, you kind of seek gay friends and people who I don't know. It's kind of. It's different. Like when you go back, it's like, hard to like, explain your life"	"I think I'm like the only queer person on my ward. And I've kind of made it. I tried to make it so let it she'll be normal"	