



Final Project:

Autistic

Conversion

"Therapy"

Queerphobia & Ableism = ABA

Violet Smith (They/Them)

Support Autistic Kid's Futures

WGSS367: Fall 2022 – WWU

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.) What is autism?
- 2.) Queerness is...
- 3.) LGBTQ+ Conversion therapy
- 4.) ABA = conversion therapy
- 5.) All conversion therapy is the same evil
- 6.) Conversion therapy is abuse
- 7.) Humanity
- 8.) Normalcy
- 9.) Pathologized
- 10.) Eugenics
- 11.) Reinforcing and Repetition
- 12.) Suicidality
- 13.) Prevent youth suicidality
- 14.) Resources
- 15.) Bibliography

Front cover: title/name/course/art.
Back cover: synopsis/trigger warnings

Table of Contents

1. What is autism?
2. Queerness is...
3. LGBTQ+ Conversion therapy
4. ABA = Conversion therapy
5. All Conversion therapy is the same evil
6. Conversion therapy is abuse
7. Humanity
8. Normalcy
9. Pathologized
10. Eugenics
11. Reinforcing and Repetition
12. Suicidality
13. Prevent youth suicidality
14. Resources
15. Bibliography

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What is Autism?

"Autism is a developmental disability- and disability is a natural part of human diversity.

Autism is something we are born with, and that shouldn't be changed. Autistic children should get the support they need to grow up into happy, self-determined Autistic adults."

(Autistic self advocacy network, 2021)

(Cannava, Carr, Greenspan, Wooman, Li, 2022)

"Autism is a viable way of being in the world."

(Douglas, Gibson, 2018)



Queerness is...

"gender & sexual non-conforming identities."

(Douglas, Gibson, 2018)

Lesbian Gender Non-conforming Trans
 Gay Bigender Pangender NBLM NBLNB
 Bisexual/Biromantic Transsexual t4t
 Transgender/transfem/transmasc
 Asexual Omni gender Polygender tranny
 Aromantic
 Omnisexual/omniromantic
 Non-Binary Sapphic Third-Gender fag
 Gender fluid Achillean Platonic partners
 Agender Polyamorous other gender
 Gender queer non-monogamous fruity
 Gray (Ace/Aro) Aro Ace Neither Gender
 Demi (Ace/Aro/girl/boy) WLW Spectrum
 Pansexual/Panromantic MLM dyke
 Two spirit/2S FTM Stud Gender outlaw
 Androgyne MTF Same-gender-loving
 Butch Gender Neutral NBLW enby
 Femme Gender variant Questioning

Two spirit = Indigenous Stud = Black Terminology

LGBTQ+ Conversion "therapy"

Sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts; are attempts to repress and alter a person's identity: often referred to as "conversion therapy." (Cannava, Carr, Greenspan, Woodman, Li, 2022) 13% of LGBTQ+ youth reported being subjected to conversion therapy, with 83% reporting it occurred when they were under age 18. (The Trevor Project, 2021)

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"Ole Ivar Lovaas had involvement in the Feminine Boy Project during the 1970's, where he catalogued and developed interventions into the gender and sexual non-conforming identities of young people" (Douglas, Gibson, 2018)

He engaged in this project: "funding, supervising, and collaborating with his student George Rekers who continues to be a central if controversial advocate for so called gay and trans "conversion therapies." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018) These violent and harmful practices continue today. His (Lovaas) actions are not a thing of the past.

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APPLIED BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS (ABA) = conversion therapy

"I propose that everytime we write or talk about ABA, we also write or say: Autistic Conversion Therapy. Both "treatments" (tortures) [Queer + autistic interventions] have the same root - the same "father" - Ivar LOVAAS" (Sequenzia, 2016)

ABA IS CONVERSION "THERAPY." IT'S VIOLENCE.

"ABA is the most commonly used and funded autism intervention today that seeks to shape "normal" behaviors in autistic children while extinguishing those behaviors designated as autistic." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018)

Ivar Lovaas says

autistic children are severely disturbed.
autistic children are retarded.
autistic children do not express love adequately
autistic children are monsters, little monsters.
autistic children should know that there's no question in his mind that he would kill them.
autistic kids should be shown punishment not love. Physical punishment is loving.

(Lovaas, Chance, 1974)

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All conversion therapy is the same evil

"Such therapies [are intended to] deliver an autism-free and gender-conforming future... Through the writings of Lovaas and his co-authors, we can see the production of the un/underdeveloped autistic person who lacks full humanity without early intervention; the gender non-conforming or trans child doomed without intervention."

We need to explore "an examination of the overlap between the regulation of autism with that of gender and sexuality in the work of Ole Ivar Lovaas." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018)

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Conversion therapy is ABUSE:

"The cruelty lies in interventions to dehumanize, coerce, regulate and do bodily violence to those deemed in need of a "cure."" (Douglas, Gibson, 2018)
"These were systematic attempts to slap, shout, reward, shock, and ignore autistic and gender non-conforming behaviors out of children." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018) Evidence from Lovaas himself...
"When he fidgets, cries, moves about, he may get a smart slap." "we scream "no" as loud as we can and we look furious and at the same time we shock them." "we know the shocks are painful." "Spank them, and spank them good." "I just reached over and cracked her one right on the rear. She was a big fat girl so I had an easy target." "After you hit a child, you can't just get up and leave him, you are hooked to that kid." "we used electric shock and spanking as punishment." "once you have taken it upon yourself to punish a child, you must then make a concerted effort to load him up with love." "Nobody punishes a child who doesn't also love that child."
"the fight for an autistic child's humanity requires saintly patience" Lovaas thinks his abuse is saintly. These are from a public interview imagine what else he did. (Lovaas, chance, 1974)

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Humanity:

Queer and autistic people are often dehumanized. "The desires- and the HUMANITY- of people; were presented as objects to change, build or erase. Ethical concerns such as consent were effaced. This belief is particularly apparent in Lovaas's interviews about autistic children when he talked about his approach as "building a person." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018) Lovaas said that "you have a person in the physical sense- they have hair, a nose, and a mouth- but they are not people in the psychological sense." (Lovaas, Chance, 1974) Seen as "monsters"/"primitive"/"abnormal"

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NORMALCY:

heteronormativity: the attitude that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression.

Cisnormativity: the idea that being trans is abnormal/unnatural.

Lovaas; claims that ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) therapies caused; the children treated to become "indistinguishable from their normal friends." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018)

These ideas perpetuate a queerphobic and ableist society where differences are seen as wrong and deviant.

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PATHOLOGIZED:

“REJECT THE NOTION THAT DISABILITY IS A PATHOLOGY TO BE AVOIDED OR CURED IN FAVOR OF THE VIEW THAT VARIATION OF BODILY FORM IS NATURAL OR NORMAL” (RAY, 2009)

“While homosexuality was delisted from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1973, this change did not eliminate the pathologization of sexual and gender deviance.” (Douglas, Gibson, 2018)

Pathologization of queerness and autism situate these identities as a deficit to a natural and normal humanity. It allows attitudes of forced assimilation and even eugenics to exist. Queer & autistic people:

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eugenics:

“Certainly the desire to eradicate disability runs deep.” (Clare, 2017) The history of Autism Studies pre-Lovaas can be traced to Kanner and Asperger. Hans Asperger; collaborated with the Nazis; actively contributed to the Nazi eugenics program; referring disabled children to a clinic he knew participated in the Third Reich’s child euthanasia program. (Baron-Cohen, Buxbaum, Kiln, Silberman, 2018) This is a reason why the term Aspergers is no longer used for autism spectrum diagnoses. What Lovaas, Kanner and Asperger have in common is they were all non-autistic (allistic) white men. Not only did they not understand what being autistic was, they enforced barriers in diagnosis and care. White boys were the only people diagnosed in youth. We need to change the culture.

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Reinforcing and repetition:

"Children received reinforcements and punishments (due to expressions of gender non-conformity) was an indication for the need of gender training, and predictive of a feared future of [queerness]." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018) "Lovaas's experiments on autistic children used positive reinforcers for desired/"normal" behaviors such as giving food, saying "good boy", and/or giving the child a hug or pat for attending lessons, using spoken language, looking at, hugging or kissing the experimenter upon request. They also used violent aversives: slaps, electric shocks and reprimands for undesired/autistic behaviors such as flapping hands, rocking, banging body parts against objects, climbing on furniture, not coming to the experimenter when asked, not hugging the experimenter, or averting their gaze." (Douglas, Gibson, 2018)

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☺☺☺ SUICIDALITY ☹☹☹

"LGBTQ youth who were subjected to conversion therapy reported more than twice the rate of attempting suicide." (The Trevor Project, 2021) "21% of transgender and non-binary youth have attempted suicide. 52% have considered suicide, and 46% of these youth who wanted mental health supports were concerned about finding a provider who upheld LGBTQ competencies." (Cannava, Carr, Greenspan, Woodman, Li, 2022) Hedley et al. (2018) found that nearly half of their sample of youth with ASD (autism) spectrum disorder had depression and over one-third (1/3) experienced suicidal ideation. (Cannava, Carr, Greenspan, Woodman, Li, 2022) These statistics are alarming and indicative of a culture rampant with queerphobia and ableism. Queer and autistic youth deserve to know the future is for them.

Suicidality

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✧ Prevent Youth Suicidality: ✧

LGBTQ youth who had access to spaces that affirmed their sexual orientation and gender identity reported lower rates of attempting suicide than those who did not. Transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having pronouns respected by all of the people they lived with attempted suicide at half the rate of those who did not have their pronouns respected by anyone with whom they lived. Transgender and non-binary youth who were able to change their name and/or gender marker on legal documents, such as driver's licenses and birth certificates, reported lower rates of attempting suicide. (The Trevor Project, 2021)

"Autistic conversion therapy is violence against our neurology, our identity, our humanity" (Sequenzia, 2016) Valuing the neurology, identity and humanity—the pronouns, names—affirming them saves lives. Autistic and queer lives are SO VALUABLE. SO VALUABLE.

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RESOURCES:

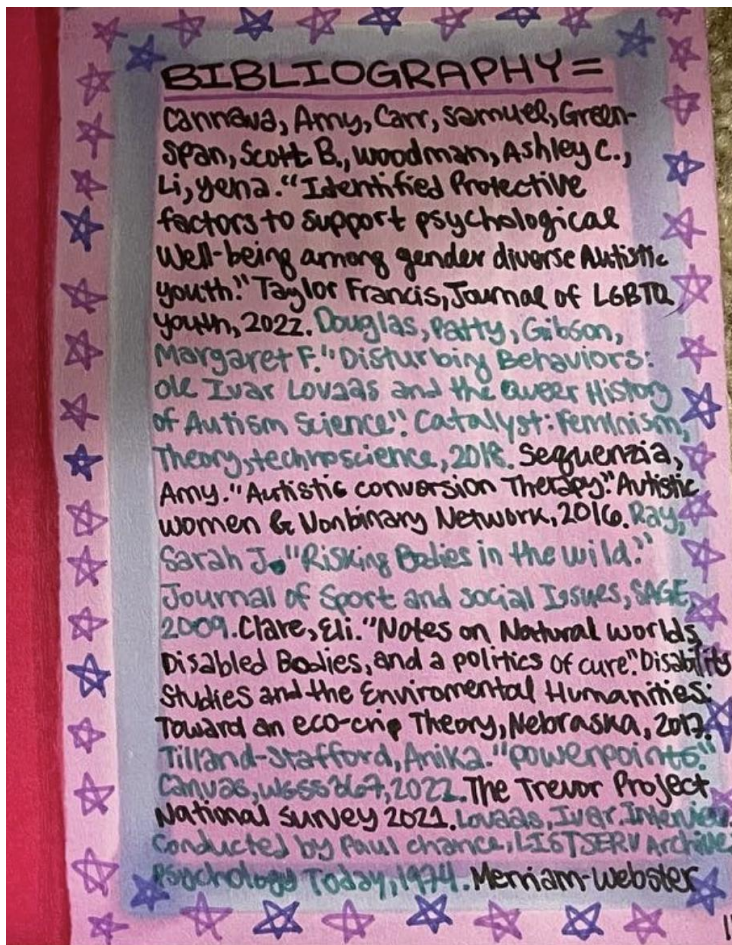
Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
 The Trevor Project (text/call or webchat)
 text: 678-678
 call: 1-866-488-7386
 webchat: (thetrevorproject.org)

Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network (AWN)
 Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860
 Suicide and crisis Lifeline: 988
 Sins Invalid.org
 BornPerfect.org
 StopABASupportAutistics.home.blog
 AutisticScienceperson.com
 Neurodivergentrebel.com

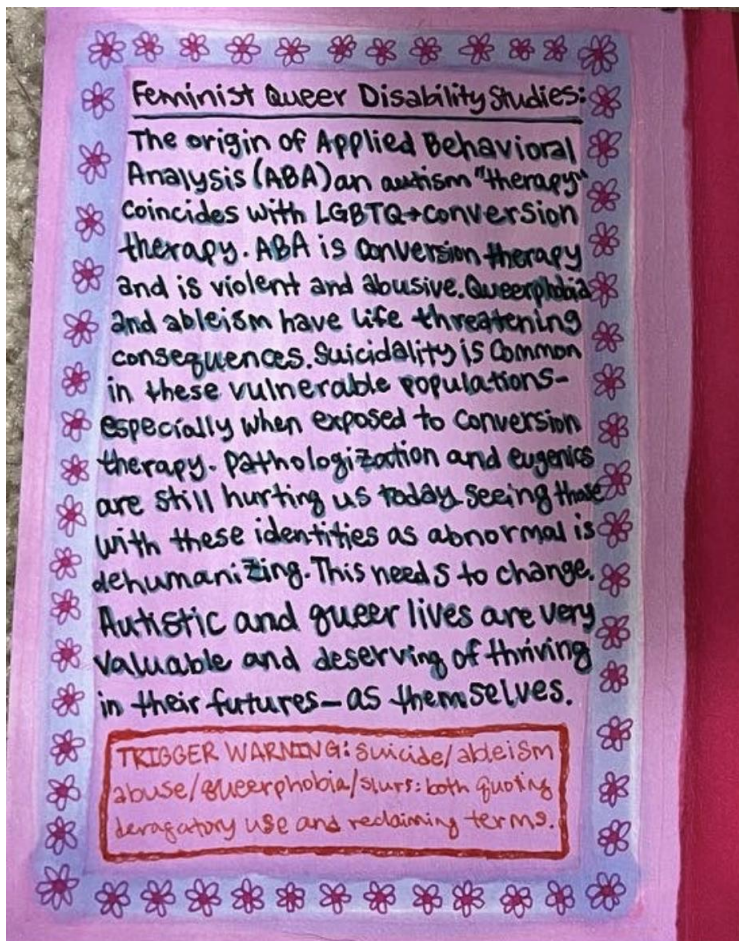
Alternative communication
 Sensory supports
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 Trauma care
 Disability Justice
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Feminist Queer Disability Studies:
 The origin of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) an autism "therapy" coincides with LGBTQ+ Conversion therapy. ABA is conversion therapy and is violent and abusive. Queerphobia and ableism have life threatening consequences. Suicidality is common in these vulnerable populations – especially when exposed to conversion therapy. Pathologization and eugenics are still hurting us today. Seeing those with these identities as abnormal is dehumanizing. This needs to change. Autistic and queer lives are very valuable and deserving of thriving in their futures- as themselves.

TRIGGER WARNING:
 suicide/ableism/abuse/queerphobia/slurs: both quoting derogatory use and reclaiming terms.

