

NOTES FROM "UNPACKING COUPLE PRIVILEGE" AT FIVE COLLEGE QUEER GENDER AND SEXUALITY CONFERENCE MARCH 2019 (w/ Kelli Dunham)

We considered the question; how on an individual, social and policy level can we combat some of the insidious destructive that happens when we value coupledness (especially a very specific form of married monogamous uninvolvement with community coupledness) over community.

SOME SUGGESTIONS INCLUDED:

ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Dump bio family who can't understand life beyond couples

Educate bio family

Ask supportive siblings to further support you

Always ask open ended questions about relationships/support etc: don't assume anyone's desire to be in a relationship or desire to get married

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY

Don't make a big deal out of single people being coupled or becoming part of what looks like a more "conventional/coupled" relationship than they have been in the past.

Empower platonic relationships/value friendships

Don't call only romantic relationships "committed" because we can (and often are) committed to our friendships

Don't assume marriage is everyone's goal

Celebrate milestones besides relationship milestones. Why do we spend more on a wedding than a book release party?

As a friend, don't shift responsibilities onto the spouse/partner/girlfriend when the person becomes coupled/in relationship. If you helped with caregiving/party planning etc in the past, continue to help.

Learn from communities who have been doing this work all along, especially the Ace community and the polyam community.

Represent all types of queer families in the art you create

Treat partnerships as valid, not just marriages

POLICY LEVEL

Push for universal health care so that we health care is not tied to jobs/relationship status

Remember nonwhite/POC queers in the mix, and how marriage focus policies can impact them even more negatively than whitefolks.

Make sure we all have the appropriate paperwork for our health care proxies

Overturn local ordinances that prohibit multiple unrelated people of the same gender living together (starts as anti sex work and then also makes it difficult to have group houses/community living)

Look at banking policies that make it hard to buy a house with more than one other person

