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An Introduction

Welcome to the How to Heal? Resource Pack. The pack is born from a vibrant LGBTQ+ craft project about queerness, collaboration, community and change. We've joined forces with queer artists and young people in Herefordshire to spark moments where craft meets activism, focusing on the landscapes of the Wye Valley.

Inside, you'll find a treasure trove of 'how-to' guides and inspiration to fuel your own craftivist journey. Whether you're looking to express yourself or champion environmental causes by leading a workshop, this resource is tailored for you by the LGBTQ+ community.

This project has brought together artists, activists and young people to imagine a queer future and plan how we can build tools to care for ourselves and our natural world.

We have focussed on craft skills and education, which can give us agency when we feel powerless. Craft allows us to slow down our consumption, consider our material choices and make a direct, positive, impact on the shape of the world around us. When we make as a group we form a community and direct energy towards caring for each other and our surroundings.

This approach of building with care provides mutual benefit. When we learn alongside nature and become more aware of our connection and responsibility to it, we can resist taking control and minimise our impact on it. We also learn to advocate for nature alongside ourselves. We begin to fight for a Queer future with environmental protection and connection as its foundation.

In return, we are able to engage with a world of abundance, diversity and fluidity. We can find affirmation when we see that plant and animal biology is far from binary. We can experience the mental and physical health benefits of green spaces and build resilience to overwhelming bad news by taking direct positive action.

Queer Ecology recognises that nature is queer and queerness is natural. This project invites you to consider your perspective and find the connections between your identity and the world around you.

Queer Ecology comes from a need to radically change our relationship to the environment. It is a way of looking at queerness and nature in partnership. We can often make assumptions about people and the natural world – that queerness is unnatural, that nature always follows rules, or that people should be in control of the world around them. This kind of thinking builds rigid categories and hierarchies and blinds us to the vital role that chaos, diversity and connection play in life on earth.

Queer Ecology seeks to deconstruct these harmful assumptions and binaries and imagine a world based on complexity and care. It follows on from work done by BIPOC environmentalists who have demonstrated that humans are not separate from nature, and challenged boundaries around who can create and define knowledge.

Queer Ecology is about approaching nature with curiosity. It is about questioning and finding creative ways to understand and connect to our world, without asking it to conform to our expectations.

From a Queer perspective, we can understand how harmful it is to reduce the complexity of life to a single biological need or category. When we see natural landscapes of vibrant biodiversity replaced by single monocultures of hyper-efficient crops, perhaps we can relate and recognise the loss and suppression of our own community.

Generations of trying to assert control over nature and human expression has caused unimaginable damage. However, Queer Ecology asserts that this damage is not irreparable. It seeks to find the connection between natural and human diversity and design a future that makes space for both.