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Scoping self-care models of queer mental health in the Hunter New England local health district, Australia

The recent inclusion of mental health in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reflects its importance as a driver of sustainable development, central to which is a sustainable, resilient and fully actualised individual. However, mental health in Australia is narrowly defined through medicine, and queer mental health is a neglected and misunderstood area in mental health service bureaucracy and models. Therapeutic applications of poetry, storytelling, creative non-fiction and art provide a salient and powerful means of exploring and portraying lived experiences of queer individuals.

This study scopes self-care models of queer mental health on the basis of diagnostic and therapeutic uses of queer poetry. Investigating the conflicts surrounding the concept and determinants of mental health, social stigma and identity politics in existing care, I will construct a medicine of self-care for queers (which is suitable for all people). The research question addressed here is: how can self-care models of queer mental health apply queer poetry as a therapeutic practice? 'Queer' in this study is used as an all-inclusive and unifying umbrella term for sexual and gender diverse people and identities. My method involves analysis of queer mental health care documents, and a qualitative case study of semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of queer population, queer poets, mental health providers and policy related academics to produce self-care guidelines.