

The Promise and Perils of “Hook Up Culture”

**Lisa Wade, PhD
Occidental College**

Featuring leaf art by Jenny Lee Fowler

Questions

- Are you hooking up?

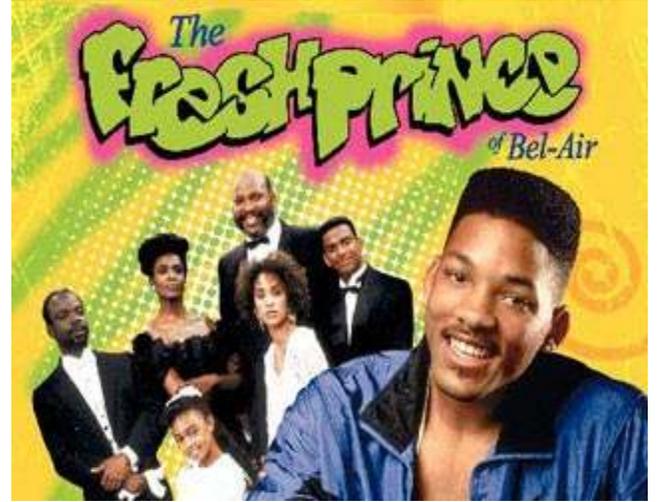
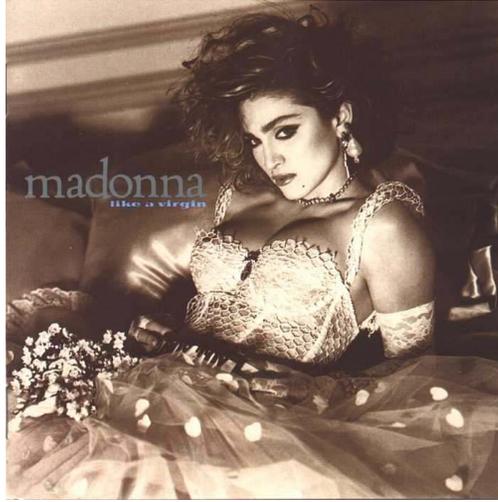


Questions

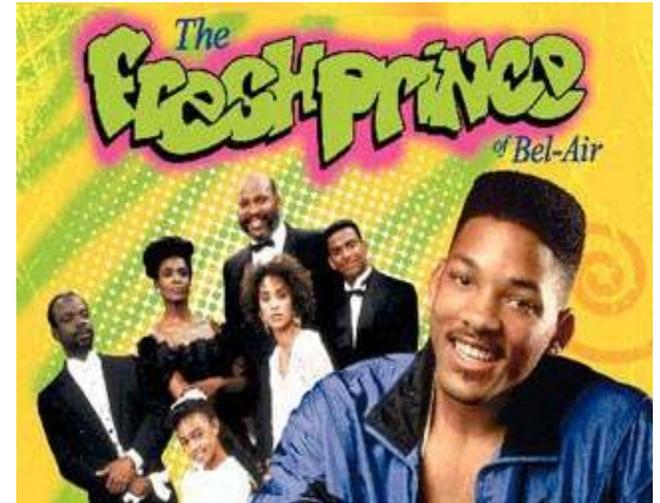
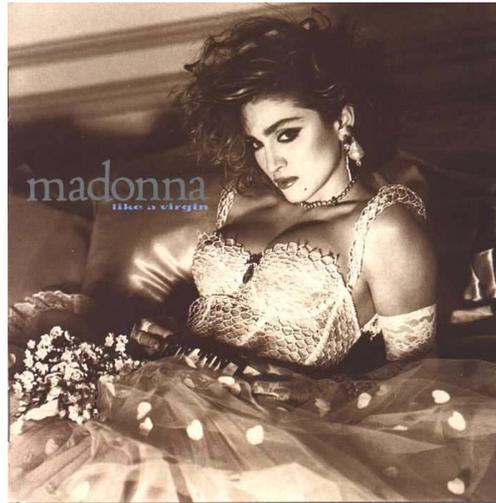
- Are you hooking up?
- And if you are, so what?



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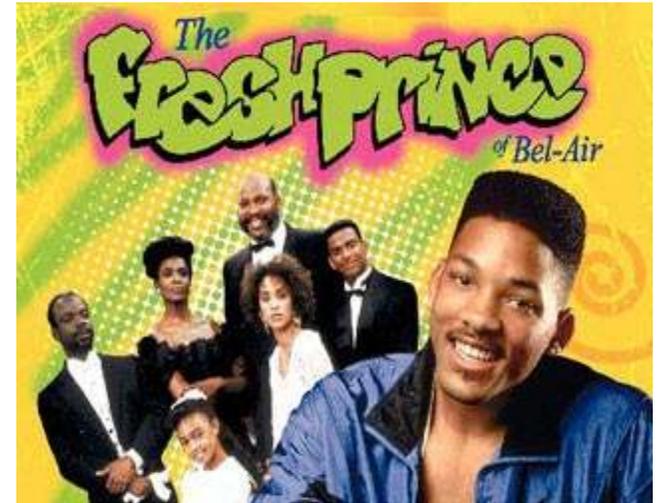
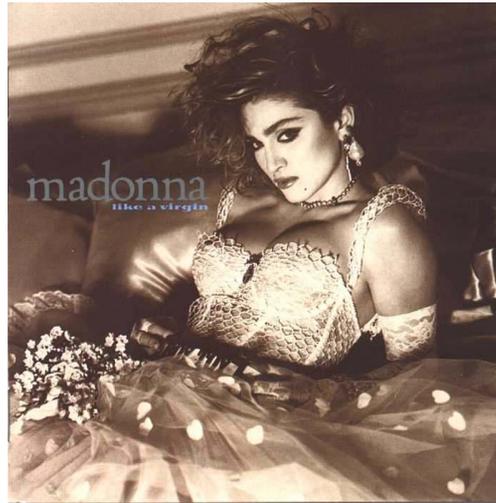


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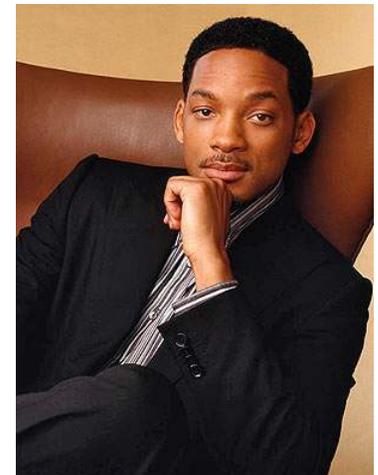
Kissing, groping, naked groping, intercourse, **oral sex**

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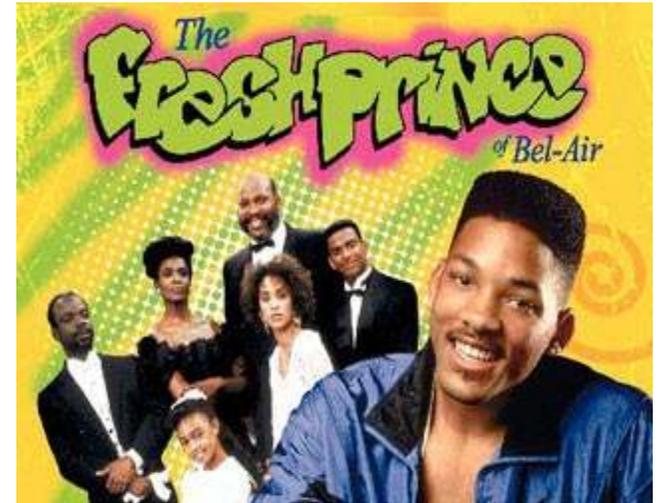
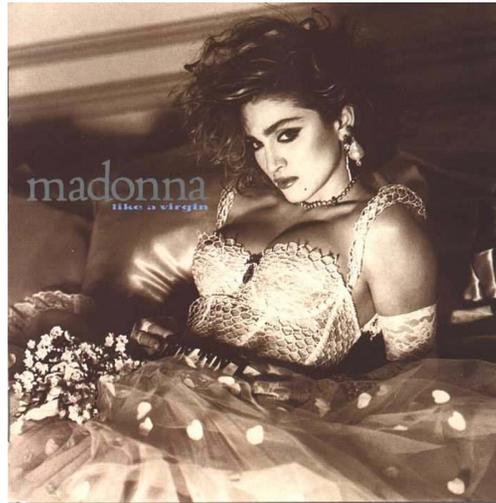


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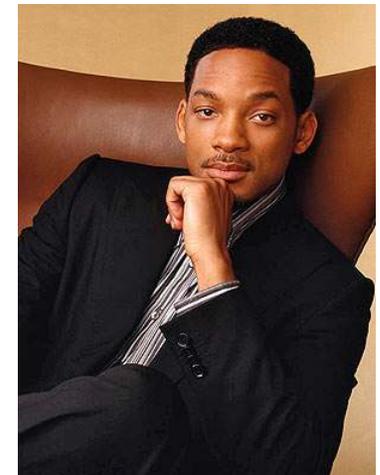
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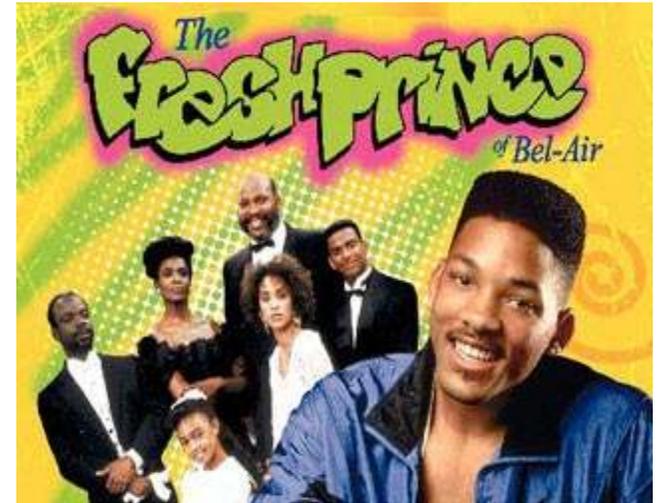
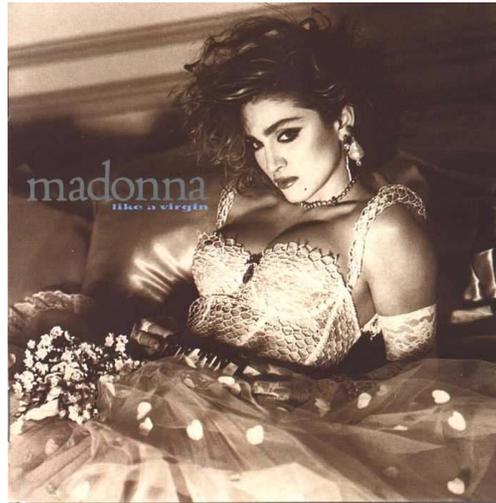
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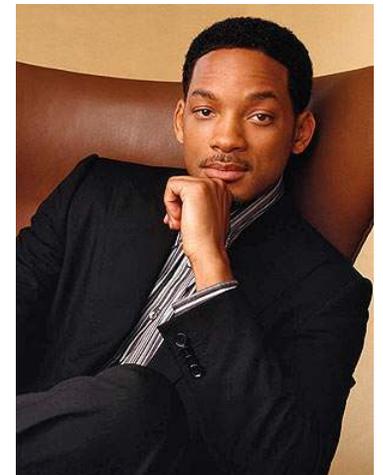
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Kissing, groping, **oral sex**, naked groping, intercourse

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Rates of Hooking Up

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- ~10% of will hook up 10 times or more.



SEXUAL ACTIVITY ON MOST RECENT HOOKUP





Dissatisfaction



Empowerment

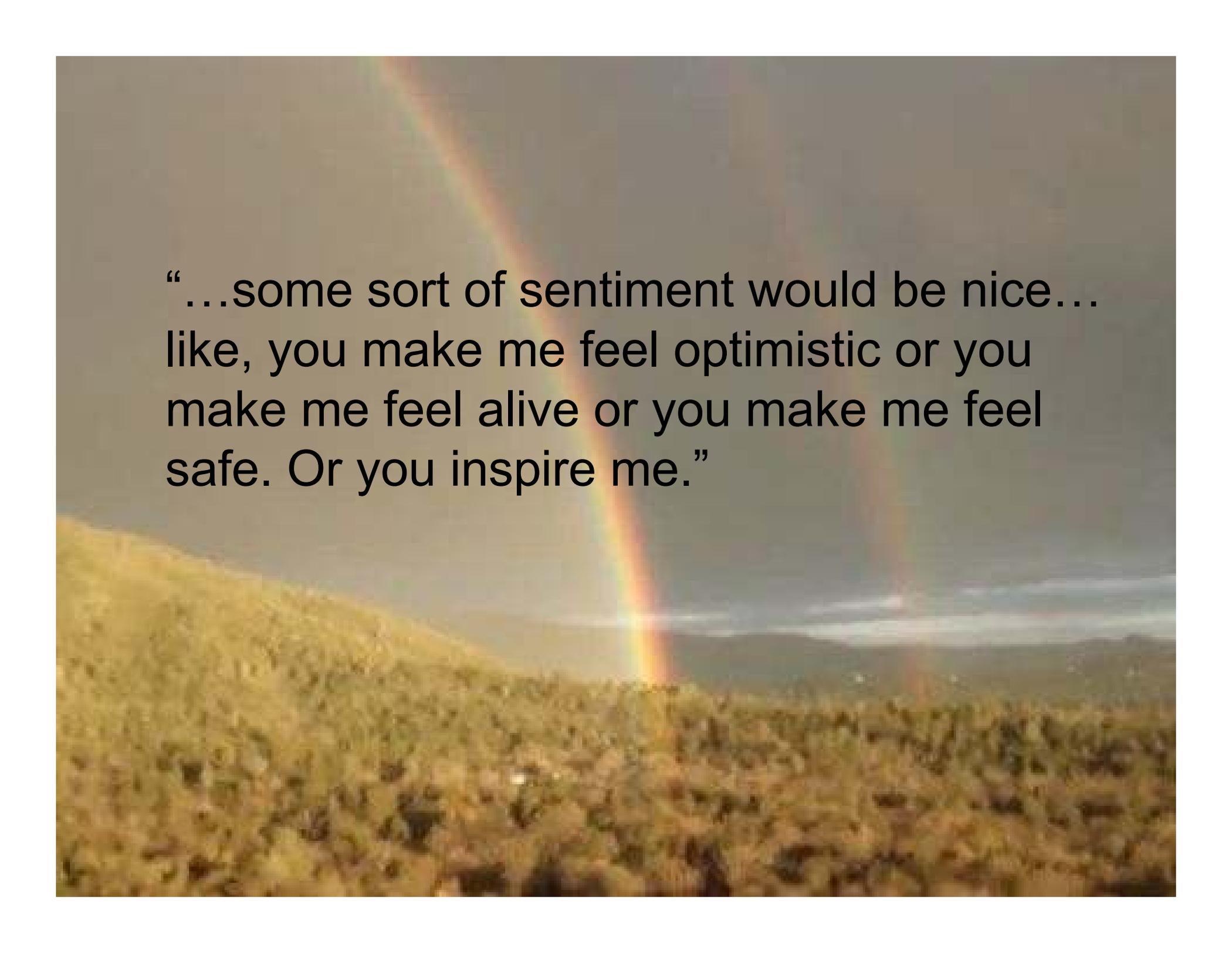


Pleasure

A vibrant sunset or sunrise over a green field. The sky is filled with colorful clouds in shades of blue, purple, orange, and yellow. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. In the foreground, there is a lush green field. The word "Meaningful" is written in large, white, serif font across the center of the image.

Meaningful

“...some sort of sentiment would be nice...
like, you make me feel optimistic or you
make me feel alive or you make me feel
safe. Or you inspire me.”

A landscape photograph showing a vibrant rainbow arching across a grey, overcast sky. The foreground is a dense forest of trees with autumn-colored foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and brown. In the distance, rolling hills and mountains are visible under the heavy sky. The rainbow is the central focus, with its colors clearly defined against the dark clouds.

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FRIENDS

with benefits!

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FRIENDS

with benefits!







“...a sober hook up indicates one that is more serious, which either no one is interested in or no one is brave enough to admit they want.”

“Even if both partners feel attracted to each other, not physically but emotionally, they do not tell each other that.”





“None of the guys here want to be my friend... just a girl that they can have a one-night stand with... After they do that, they don't care... [They] could care less about what I do with my life or if I ever see them again. Many times afterward the guy will not say hello or even acknowledge my presence.”

“You could have labeled it friends with benefits...”



“You could have labeled it
benefits...
...without the friendship maybe?”



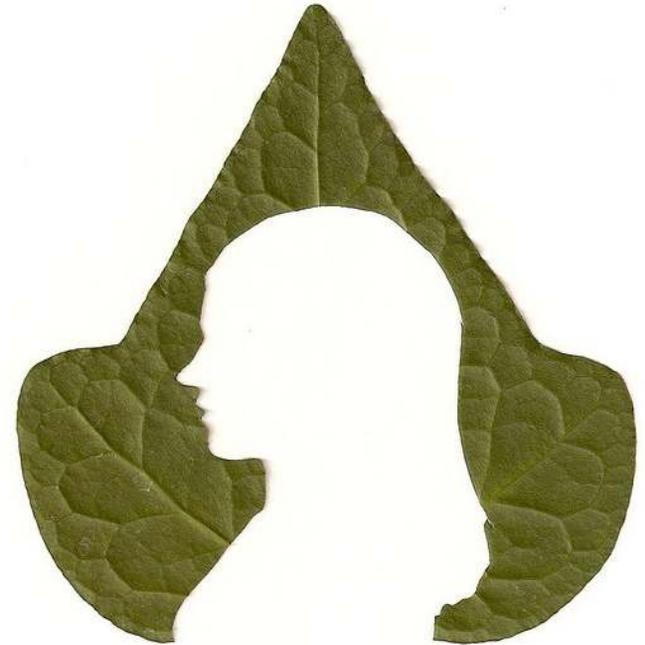


Empowerment





“...a lot of boys... feel that it is necessary to drink hardcore and when they are drunk they try to push you into engaging in sex...”





“Even nice guys feel pressured into having sex and thus pressure women into having sex with them...”

“...so I was making out with Mark while Mitch was touching me, in order to distract them so they wouldn't touch her when she was feeling so vulnerable. I wasn't attracted to Mitch, but was too wasted to say no when he pulled off my pants... I couldn't keep both guys busy for long, though, but because Mark and April had hooked up before, I let him kiss and touch her. Mitch had pulled me onto the floor...”



“...the night overall wasn't bad.”





Pleasure



“...anything we did was not pleasurable to me. I could not be satisfied by him in any way.”



“I was just a warm body being used to make a guy have an orgasm.”



“I felt like a sex toy with three holes and two hands.”



“My sexuality was filled with anxiety and my need to please the guy instead of worrying about my own pleasure.”



“...even if I was in charge I did not make sure I was being pleased.”



“...the guy kind of expects to get off, while the girl doesn't expect *anything*...”

Dissatisfaction

- 11% of students loved hooking up



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- 50% were ambivalent about it



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- 38% “opted out” of sex altogether



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- 50% were ambivalent about it
- 38% “opted out” of sex altogether
- <1% were in relationships



“At first I felt free and life seemed to be so great. When my experiences became more intimate, however, I found that I actually had a lower sex drive than I did in high school. Even oral sex seemed to just not be right deep down inside, even though on the surface it was extremely pleasurable.”



Dominance

“...for me, this casual sex has been life-changing. It’s amazing to finally have that desire. I’ve wanted for five years now to desire to have sex, to enjoy sex... Now I can finally have those things and it is truly liberating.”





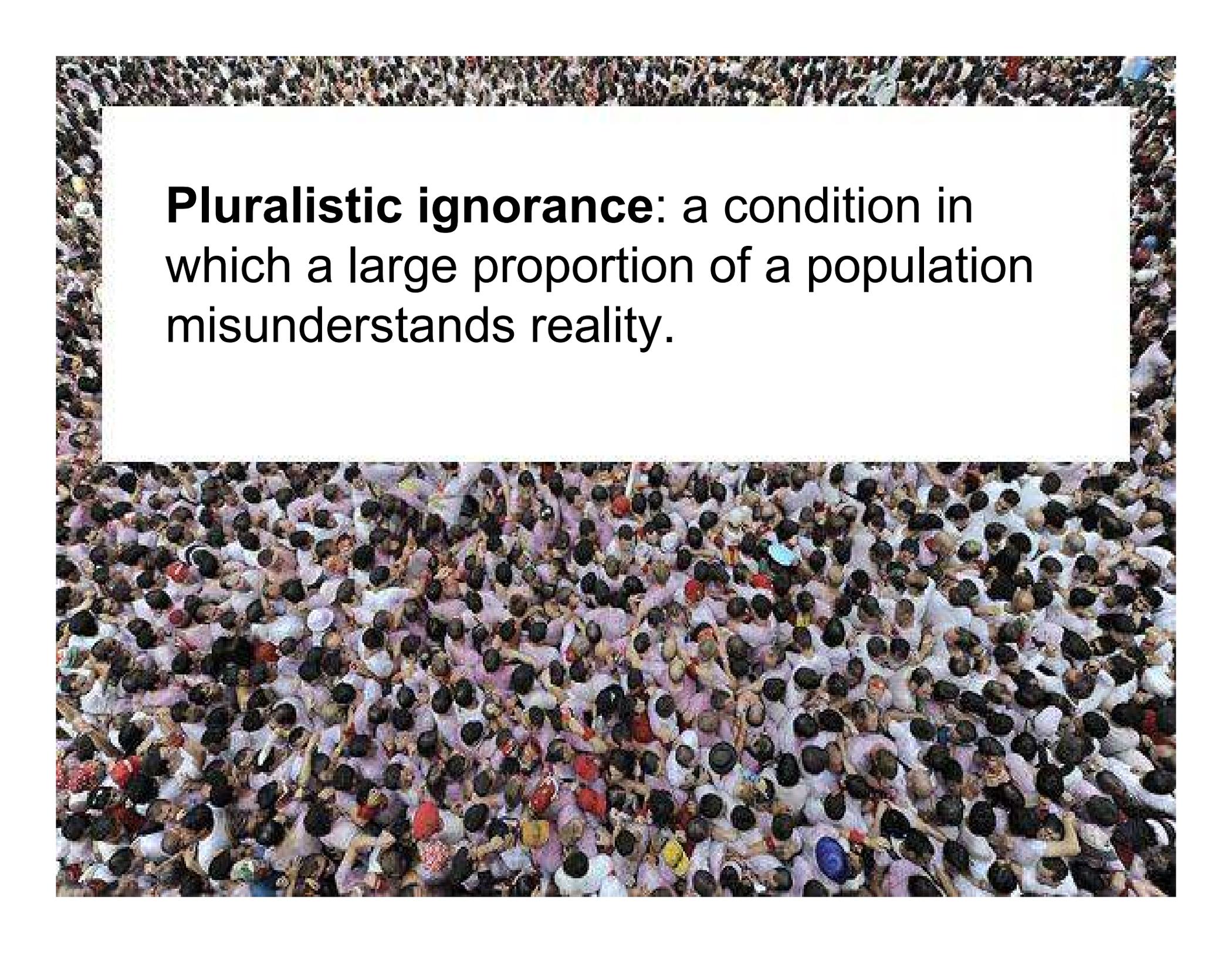
“...every experience that I have had with these guys has taught me more about who I am and what type of role sex has in my life. I am no longer afraid to give into my desires, but I am also aware of what I feel is right and wrong.”

“I wouldn’t mind having a boyfriend again, but it’s a lot of work. Right now with [my major] and everything... I wouldn’t have time even to see him.”

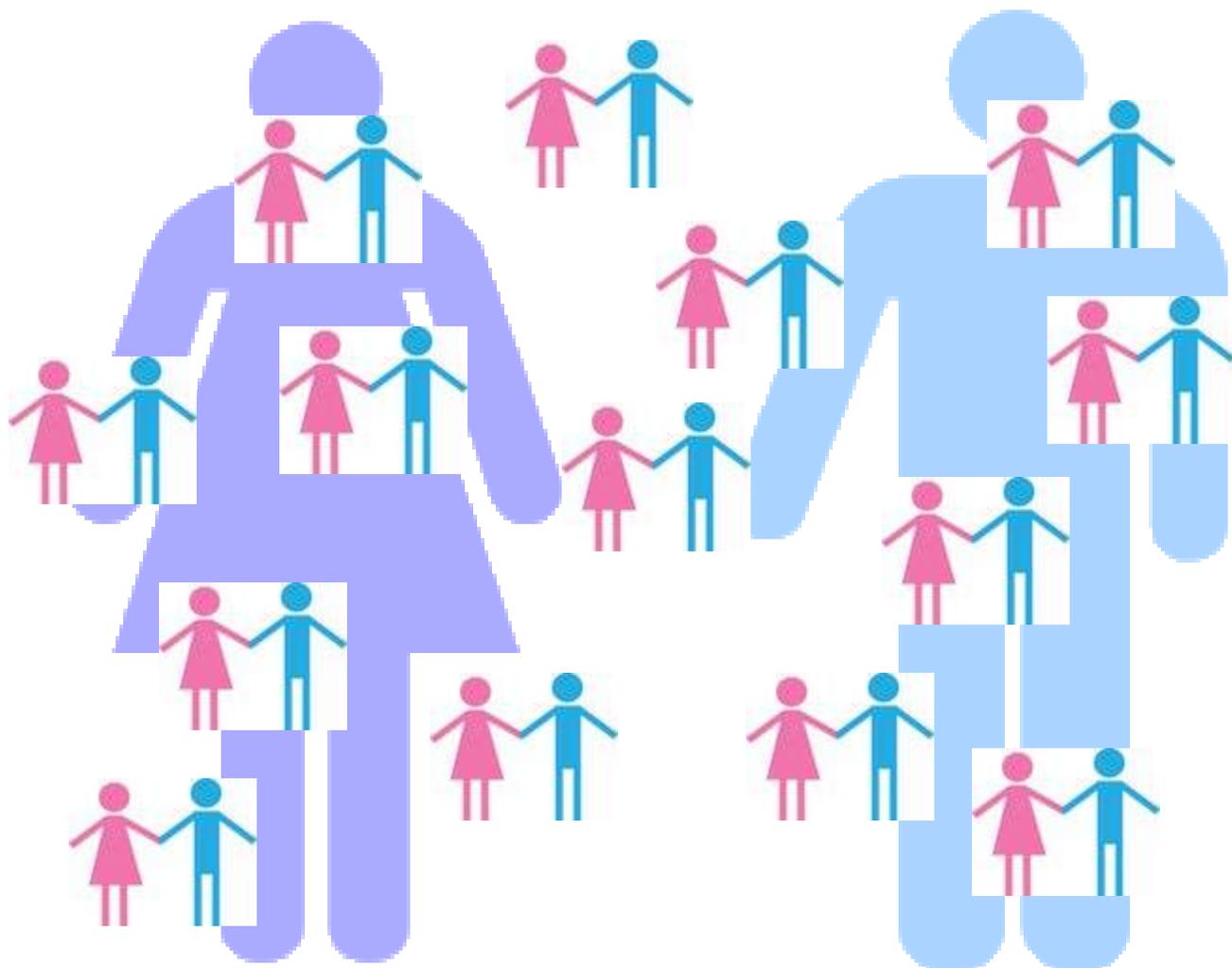




“...the *definitive* of sexual relations between college students.”



Pluralistic ignorance: a condition in which a large proportion of a population misunderstands reality.





“It is much harder to stick to my high morals of remaining *pure* here... I find myself in conflict with myself... Always having to internally fight the desire to do sexual things with girls is not easy... The carefree atmosphere really has hit me... I feel more free and unbounded, but at the same time, guilt beyond imagination.”

hooking up



hooking up
relationships



hooking up
relationships

same sex exploration



hooking up
relationships

same sex exploration

abstinence



hooking up
relationships

same sex exploration

abstinence

feminist sex



hooking up
relationships

same sex exploration

abstinence

feminist sex

other?



hooking up
relationships

same sex exploration

abstinence

feminist sex

other?



Hook up or shut up.

Is this sexual liberation



hooking up
relationships
same sex exploration
abstinence
feminist sex
other?





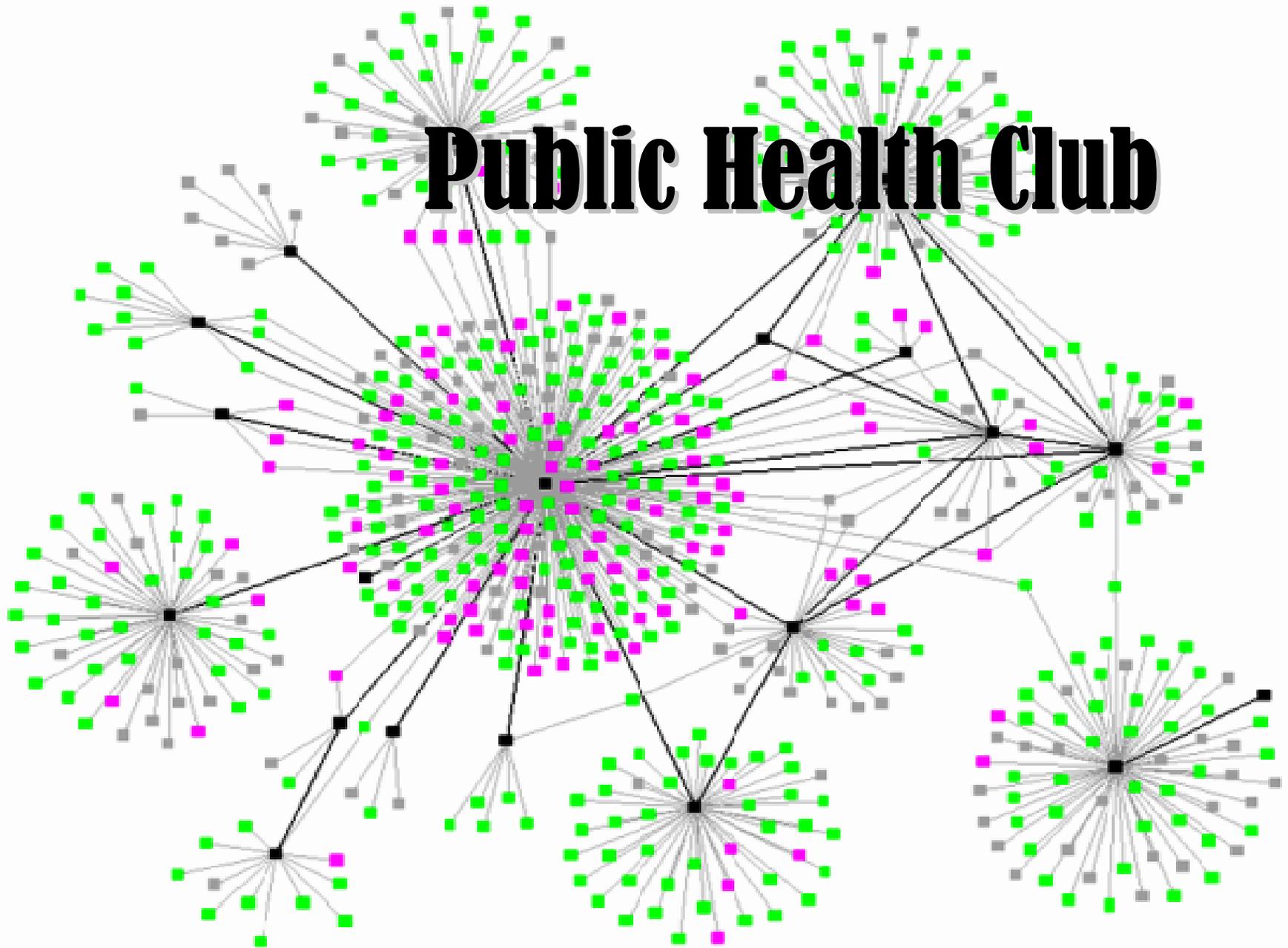
Hillel

Intervarsity Christian Fellowship

John Newman Association

Orthodox Christian Fellowship

Public Health Club



A photograph of a white plastic tray containing a row of colorful folders. The folders are arranged in a line, with their spines facing the viewer. The colors of the folders, from left to right, are green, blue, purple, red, orange, and yellow. The text "LGBTQA Club" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, bold, serif font.

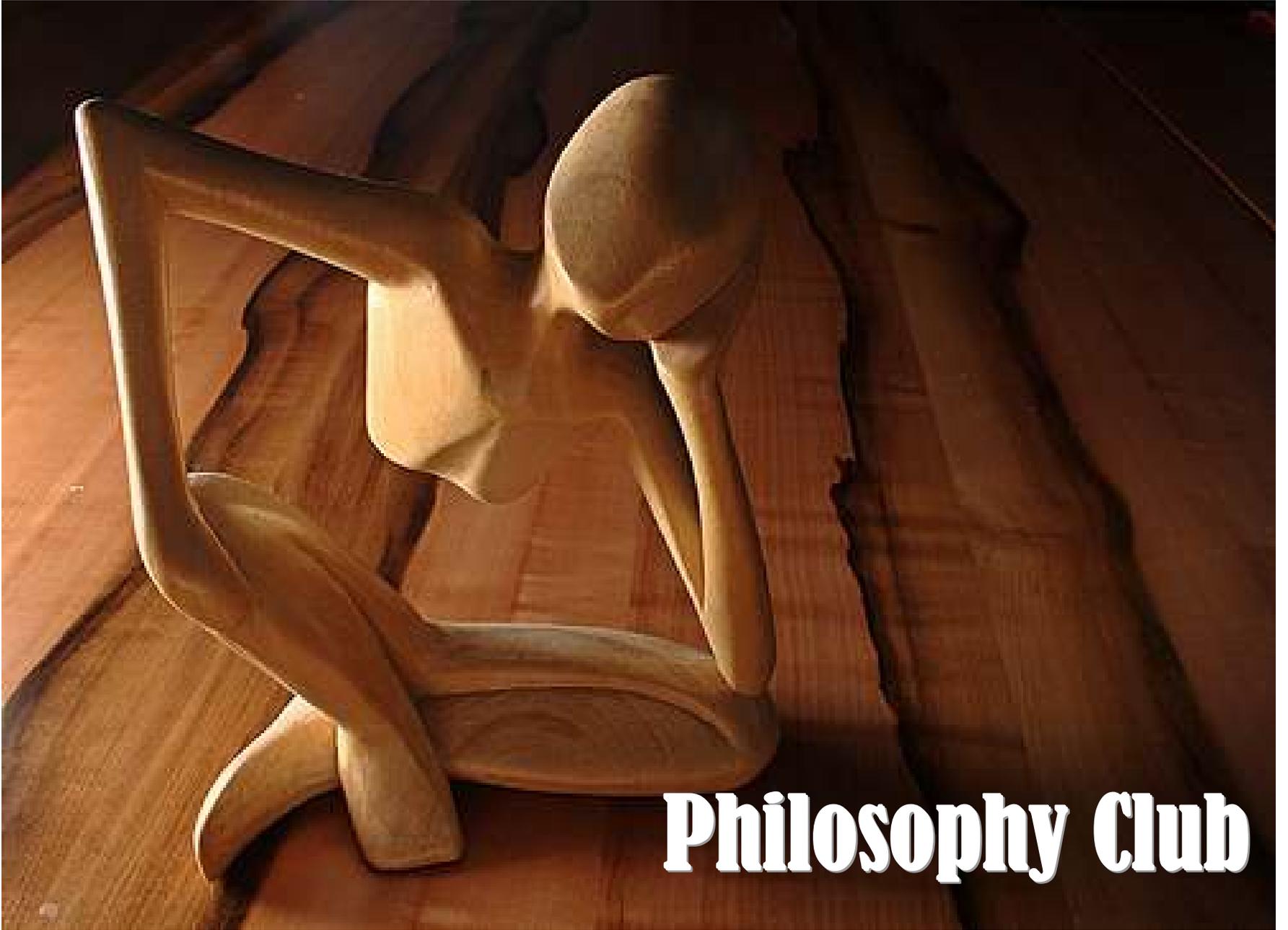
LGBTQA Club

STAND UP AGAINST



1 in 4, SAVE, .08

SEXUAL ASSAULT



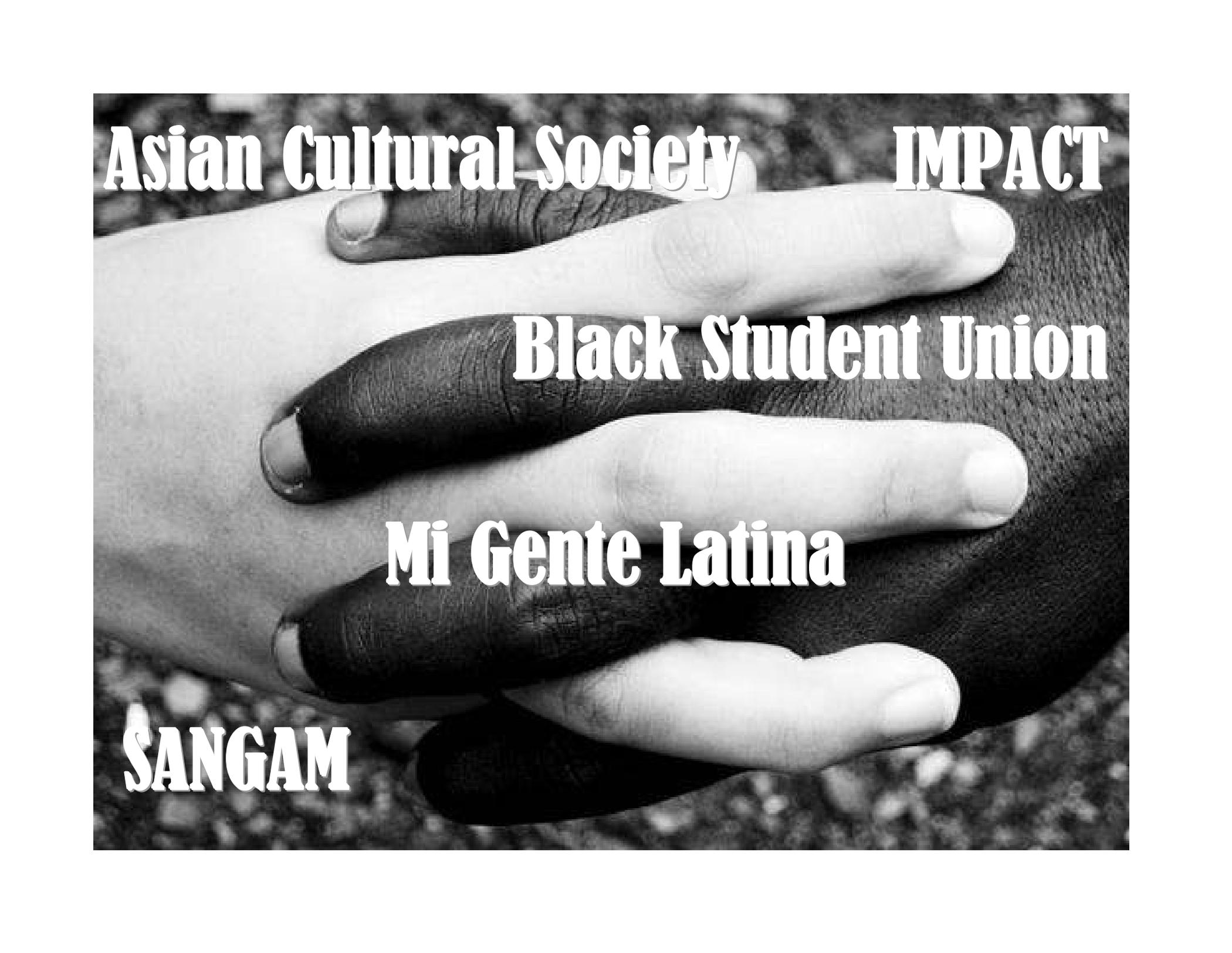
Philosophy Club



Anthropology Club

French Club

German Club



Asian Cultural Society

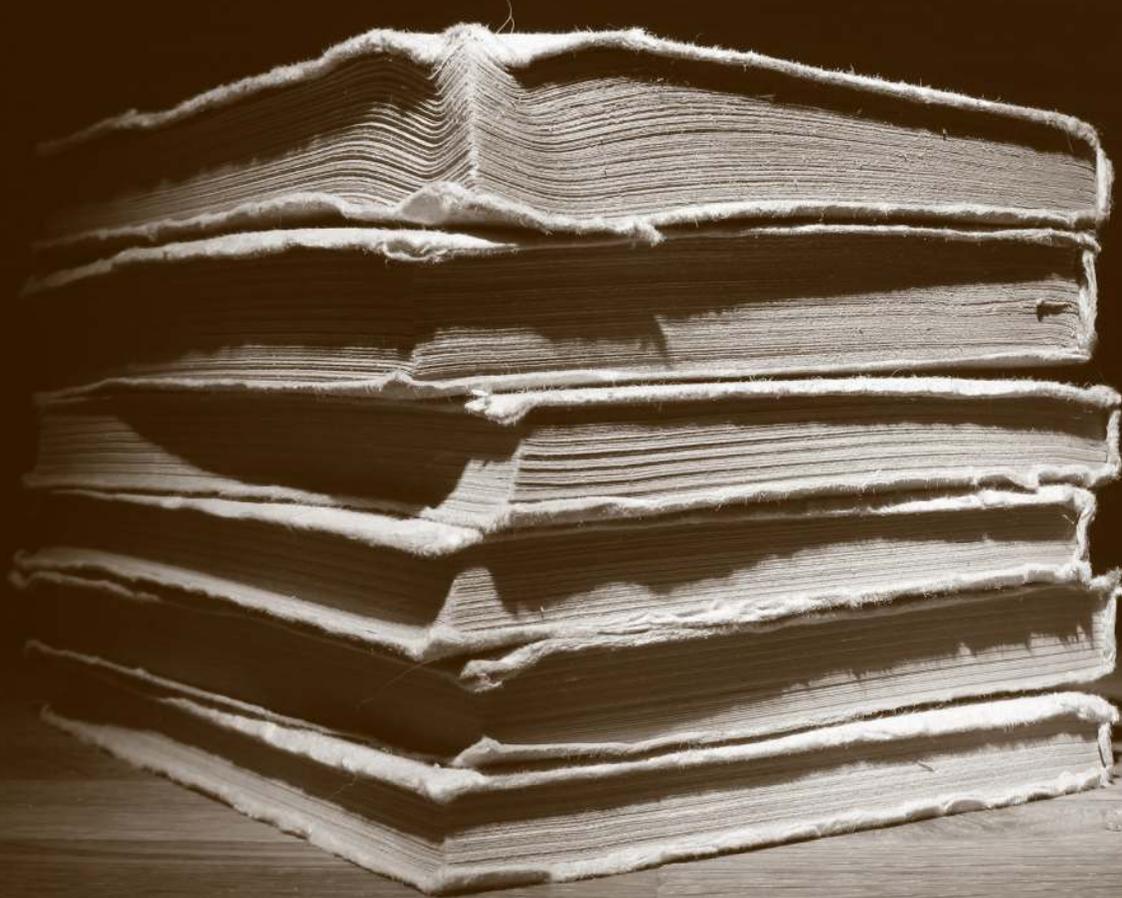
IMPACT

Black Student Union

Mi Gente Latina

SANGAM

Plume and Prolog



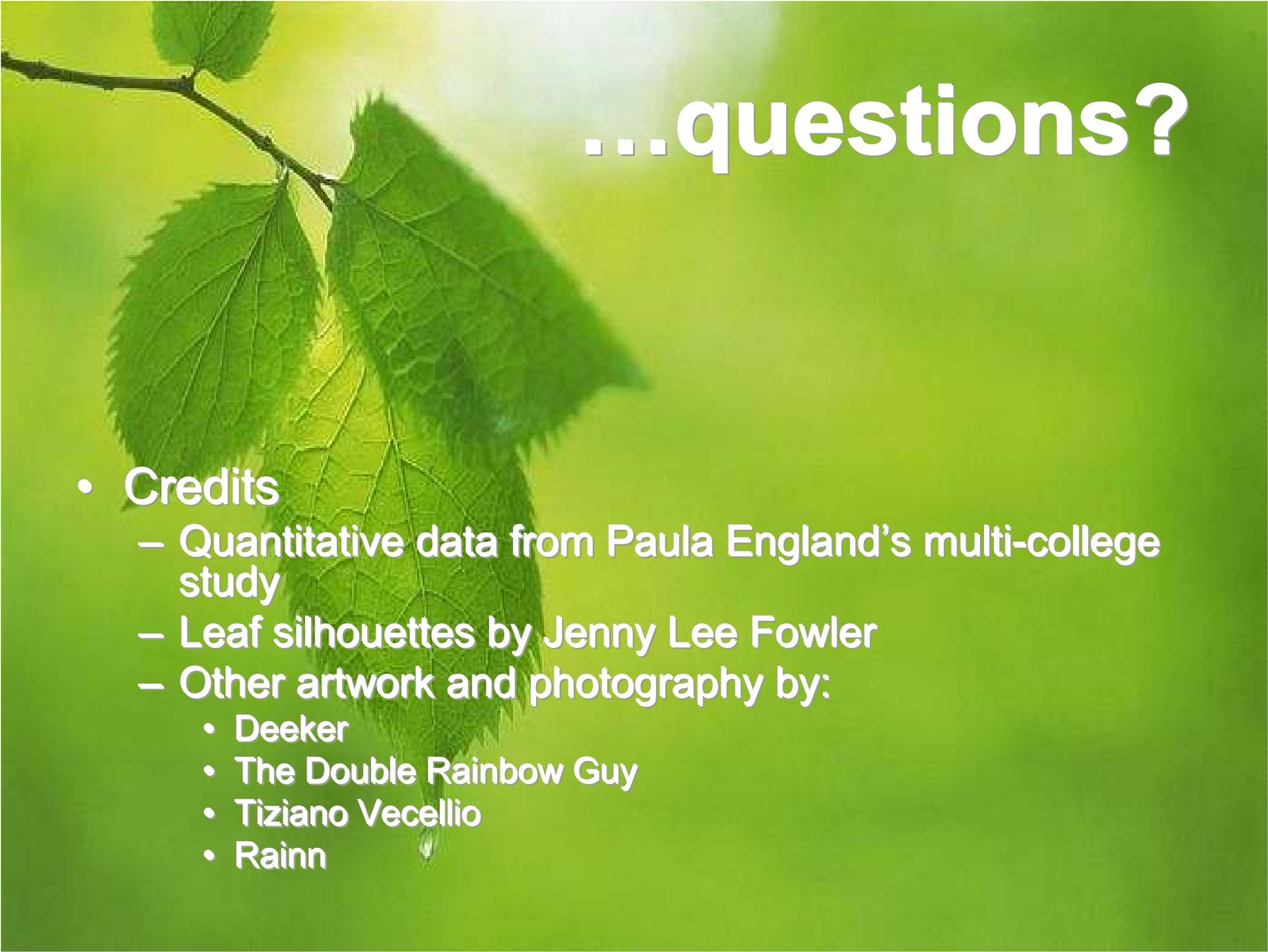
Film Society

Gaming Society



YOU





...questions?

- Credits

- Quantitative data from Paula England's multi-college study
- Leaf silhouettes by Jenny Lee Fowler
- Other artwork and photography by:
 - Deeker
 - The Double Rainbow Guy
 - Tiziano Vecellio
 - Rainn