

Relationship Types

There are many types of love that we can experience simultaneously for multiple people whether familial, platonic, romantic, or sexual. Love for one person doesn't detract from the love for another.

Non-monogamy, or multiamory/multigamy, is the umbrella covering relationship types. Non-monogamy is often referred to as Consensual or Ethical Non-monogamy to displace the stigma that a non-monogamous relationship is "cheating in disguise". The relationship types could be:

- ♥ Monogamy - a relationship between 2 people which is closed and exclusive
- ♥ Monogamish - predominantly monogamous but may have consensual and occasional sexual experiences outside of the exclusive dynamic, e.g. threesomes
- ♥ Swinging - where individuals explore sexual relationships outside of their exclusivity in an agreed way e.g. sex clubs, partner swapping
- ♥ Open Relationship - a relationship which is open in some aspect, i.e. the individuals might be open to other sexual partners and/or romantic partners outside of their primary relationship.
- ♥ Polyamory - the openness to multiple romantic and/or sexual relationships at the same time
- ♥ Relationship Anarchy - not abiding to the societal labels or expectations around relationships. Each relationship is defined purely by the individuals involved and may be a mix of platonic, romantic, and/or sexual.

All of these relationships are valid.

There is also:

- ♥ Non-consensual Non-monogamy - relationships that aren't consensual in some form e.g. cheating, breaking boundaries, coercive control.

This type of relationship can still be valid to the client, but it can also be one we might challenge the client on around their wellbeing and safety.

Stigmas and Myths

There are many stigmas and myths around non-monogamy in Western Society. These stigmas and myths are often around the legitimacy & validity of the relationship:

- ♥ It won't last
- ♥ It can't work
- ♥ You're looking to fill a void
- ♥ You're obsessed with sex
- ♥ You're sexually irresponsible/ must have STDs
- ♥ You don't value your partners
- ♥ Your partners are just going along with it
- ♥ It's just an excuse to cheat
- ♥ If you're single you can't be non-monogamous

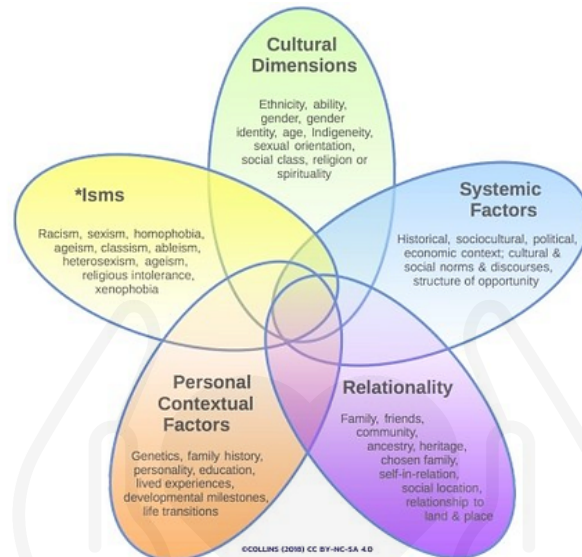
Stigmas and myths generally come from a place of misunderstanding and insecurities. Non-monogamy can be scary to many in society because it goes against the grain and it's generally not what's expected in Western Society. However this doesn't mean they are true and don't have scientific standing either, as you've seen from the course much of the research available shows that non-monogamous relationships can be just as valid, satisfying, and healthy as any monogamous relationship is.

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Intersectionality

This is a huge topic so I will keep this as brief as possible as an overview!

Intersectionality is the makeup of a person, specifically to do with the parts of the person that may have caused disadvantage or oppression in society. This can be gender, sexuality, age, race, religion, culture, class etc.



Each intersection will have a different impact on each individual as well as how they all overlap and impact each other. For example, my experience as a Woman in the world has had an impact on my life, however my experience of being a White Woman, won't be the same as a Black Woman's experience in the world. Likewise, my experience as a Chronically Ill Woman won't be the same as a healthy woman's.

Things to consider

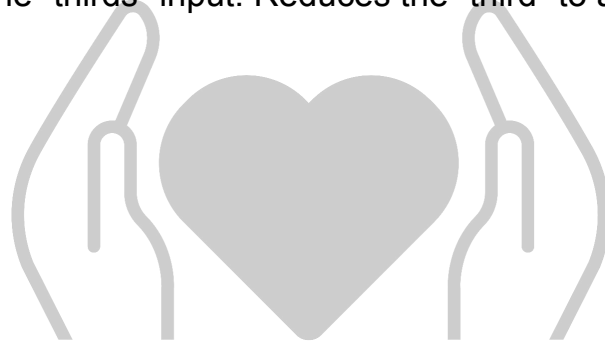
There can be a lot to navigate when exploring non-monogamous relationships and dynamics.

Common themes are:

- ♥ Communication - being able to hold your boundaries in relationships and how to communicate this to those around you. How to manage ruptures in dynamics and in the polycule structure.
- ♥ Opening up - as polyamory becomes more talked about in the media, there are more people opening up to the idea of non-monogamy and what this might mean for them and their own relationship.
- ♥ Being out & Identity - this might be a struggle with the idea of 'coming out' to those around you and how this might look. It can bring on conversations around your identity and what it means to express this in different ways.
- ♥ Jealousy - jealousy can be a big part in people new to non-monogamy, but as it's a natural emotion it can play a part in experienced individuals too. Jealousy often comes from a place of insecurity or fear, so exploring inwards with yourself is helpful.
- ♥ Capacity - non-monogamy does take more commitment and energy. So capacity and managing different relationships around life, health, family, hobbies etc. can be something to think about and manage.
- ♥ Dating - being non-monogamous can open individuals up to the challenges of dating alongside maintaining on-going relationships. Fears of rejection and break ups whilst also being in loving and supportive relationships can be difficult to navigate.
- ♥ Dependents - having children can be a challenge when in non-monogamous relationships - when do you introduce your partners, do you tell your children, how do you manage childcare and make sure your children aren't emotionally neglected.
- ♥ Relationship Escalator - Do you want a relationship which follows a "timeline" of progress or are you open to a more fluid and personal defined relationship with each individual?
- ♥ Safe Sex Practices - Safe sex takes some discussion and boundaries to be put in place for all involved in the polycule. There is a chain reaction when there is a varied polycule, and each person's input is valid to consider.

Things to avoid

- ♥ Non-monogamy being a fix - it is not there to fix an ongoing relationship or yourself.
- ♥ Non-monogamy being superior - all relationship types are valid, whilst some might take more work, it doesn't mean it is superior.
- ♥ Control - abusive control in relationships can still happen, so do be aware of this when looking into exploring non-monogamy and get support in place if needed.
- ♥ Couples Privilege - an exclusive dyad dynamic setting rules for other partners to follow, having veto powers on their partners relationships, or not seeking consent when sharing information.
- ♥ Unicorn Hunting (UH) - looking for a "third" person to join an ongoing relationship where the guidelines and boundaries are set by the existing dyad without the "thirds" input. Reduces the "third" to an object.



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Resources

Websites:

<https://www.morethantwo.com/polyglossary.html>

<https://medium.com/polyamory-today>

<https://poly.land/categories/start-here/>

<https://polypirat.es/explain/enm/>

Books:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ethical-Slut-Practical-Polyamory-Relationships/dp/0399579664> - also on audible

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Polysecure-Attachment-Trauma-Consensual-Nonmonogamy/dp/1944934987> - also on audible

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Anxious-Persons-Guide-Non-Monogamy-Relationships/dp/1839972130>

Podcasts:

<http://polyweekly.com/>

<https://www.normalizingnonmonogamy.com/>

<https://lovingwithoutboundaries.com/>

<https://www.multiamory.com/podcast#gsc.tab=0>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/chillpolyamory/>

<https://www.instagram.com/polypages/>

https://www.instagram.com/polyamory_awareness/

<https://www.instagram.com/polyamproud/>

<https://www.instagram.com/polyamfam/>

<https://www.instagram.com/polyamcomix/>

<https://www.instagram.com/polyamorousplatypus/>

<https://www.instagram.com/thepolyamoroustherapist/>

<https://www.instagram.com/polyphiliablog>

Communities:

I am hesitant to recommend any as many are big groups and so each persons experience of them will be different but some ideas of places to look that others have found useful:

- [Search "polyamory" on Facebook](#) for groups you can join.

- Reddit has many different subreddits around non-monogamy:

<https://www.reddit.com/r/nonmonogamy/>

<https://www.reddit.com/r/polyamory/>

<https://www.reddit.com/r/Swingers/>

- Try looking on meetup for in person non monogamy groups:

<https://www.meetup.com/topics/polyamory/>

- Discord is a wonderful online community space with many servers available to join:

<https://disboard.org/servers/tag/polyamory>