**Polyamory 101**

**What Polyamory is not.**

Ethical non-monogamy comes in several forms. It is important to make the distinction between this and polyamory standing alone. There seems to be an ongoing debate in B&P regarding this issue. This discussion is not meant to minimize any form of ethical non-monogamy, rather clear up the differences between them.

**Questions for discussion:**

1. Many Poly discussions refer to non-monogamy and polyamory as two separate things. Are they, in fact, one and the same?
2. Why has it been so hard for the distinction to be made between Polygamy and Polyamory?
3. Why is it that swinging and polyamory so often thought to be one and the same by people in the swinging community and society at large? Why is it so hard for them to see the distinction between the two?
4. The polyamorous community tends to treat swingers as a stain on the community. What are some ways that we can discourage this type of behavior within our own community?

**Why we hide our poly lovestyle.**

Many in the Poly community are not “out of the closet” when it comes to their poly lovestyle. From small children to moral clauses in employment contracts, there are a number of reasons why some of us do not feel comfortable with being open about polyamory.

**Questions for discussion:**

1. How much does the oversexualization of black women by the media play a part in this desire to repress in our daily lives? (i.e. Black women are freaks stereotype, video vixens, the winning of an Oscar for Monsters Ball by Halle Barry)
2. For those that are not out, do you envision a time where you can be out of the closet?
3. Will discussing our Poly lives in the workplace and with friends, help or harm efforts toward Polynormativity?
4. If you have come out as Poly, what are the psychological effects that you have felt as a result of your openness?

**Do Black People Really Do This?**

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**Questions for discussion:**

1. How much does the oversexualization of black women by the media play a part in this desire to repress in our daily lives? (i.e. Black women are freaks stereotype, video vixens, the winning of an Oscar for Monsters Ball by Halle Barry)
2. For those that are not out, do you envision a time where you can be out of the closet?
3. Will discussing our Poly lives in the workplace and with friends, help or harm efforts toward Polynormativity?
4. How do we change the paradigm of having secret multiple families in our community being more accepted than honest and consensual non-monogamy?

**Legal Issues in Polyamory**

With more and more members discussing Poly families and communes, it is important to look at the laws surrounding cohabitation and the rights of all parties involved.

**Questions for discussion:**

1. Since there are no laws in place that recognize a polyamorous marriage as a legal union, how can we ourselves recognize and honor that union?
2. Many Poly families have protected their finances by setting themselves up as a corporation. Is this an option that is viable for Black Poly families? Or is this just another way that proves that polyamory can only be practiced effectively by the already well off? If it is viable, do you feel that Black families will go through the trouble?
3. Given the danger of losing custody of your children in a divorce or breakup, is it best to keep your polyamorous lifestyle a secret from friends and family? Or do you think the support from them will help in the long run?

**Triads, Unicorns, Unicorn Hunters…**

Triads seem to be the gateway to polyamory. Most couples new to polyamory start off with desiring a triad.

**Questions for discussion:**

1. Why is it that, despite the negative connotation associated with the Unicorn, it is still the most coveted dynamic for newcomers to Polyamory?
2. Is this negativity a fair assessment of this dynamic? If so, why? If not, why is the negativity so prevalent in the poly community?
3. Why would someone- mainly women- present themselves as a Unicorn knowing the skepticism surrounding the success of this dynamic?
4. What are some common issues when opening up?
5. What are some common assumptions and errors that lead to trouble?

**Group Share/Open Floor Discussion**