

BODY SOVEREIGNTY GUIDE

for Indigiqueer self-advocacy in healthcare settings

by Shilo George



Lush Kuntux Tumtum Consulting, LLC

INSTRUCTIONS

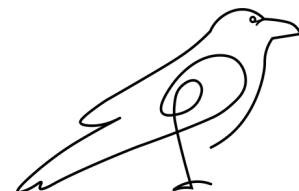
This is a template and was made by me, Shilo George, in response to continually having problems with medical providers not listening to my concerns, badgering me with weight loss and diet talk, and struggling to understand that I'm the center of my health and wellness goals, not them. I felt it would be helpful to be very clear with my boundaries and my expectations for care.

I've used this template for three years with providers that I see on a regular basis and it has worked well for me. All the providers I've used this template with have appreciated understanding where I'm coming from and what I expect in the medical care. I have found it to be most beneficial to hand this printed document to the front desk staff when giving them my medical history documents at the first appointment. That way the practitioner can read through it BEFORE they see me in their exam room. Then we can discuss the document and I can make sure they are on-board with my requests. I've found that having them read the document before they see me helps with the power dynamic.

The front desk staff may tell you to give it to the practitioner when they enter the exam room, but tell them no and that you want the doctor to read it before they see you. Be firm with them if needed and don't take any crap from them. They are there to provide you services and help you out.

Feel free to add or delete sections that don't apply to you. Know that seeking and receiving medical services is about you and you are in charge. It's your body, not theirs. You don't have to be weighed if you don't want to (though you may want to in the case of needing weight to determine medications) and you can refuse any treatment, including vital signs, at any time for any reason. They CANNOT do anything with your body without your consent unless you are unconscious.

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NOMENCLATURE



What do I want my provider to know?

In this section put any identities that you have that you want the provider to know about. This could include race, religion/spirituality, gender identity, sexuality, or another identity. Let them know your pronouns and any other identity words you want use. I'm leaving my section about being fat in case you would like to use any of it.

Pronouns: she / her / hers

What are yours?



NOTE

Fat: I call myself fat and prefer to be called fat. I understand medical providers are very uncomfortable using the term “fat” so person of size or larger body is okay. **NEVER** address my body as obese, or that I have obesity, and especially **NEVER** use the term morbid obesity. I **HATE** those terms and find them oppressive and insulting. The term “morbid obesity” is so incredibly upsetting to me and insulting and I consider it a death threat.

MEDICAL PROVIDERS SHOULD SUPPORT MY HEALTH & WELLNESS GOALS BY:



Understanding that my ultimate goal for my health and wellness is to respect this body I have been gifted with as it is now and respect the journey I have been on in this body. Out of that foundation and framework of healing and respect comes the strength and focus to make changes in behavior, thought, and attitude. I will not continue to see myself and my body in a deficient model framework, but will utilize my strengths, talents, and other resources to leverage the changes I would like to make.



Understanding that I am the expert of my own body and will make the final decisions about any surgeries, procedures, interventions, and conversations about my own body, health, and wellness.



Understanding that as someone who has a body that transgresses western standards/ideals of health, sexuality, body size, and desirability and someone who has had to deal with many acts of neglect, bias, abuse, and misinformation from medical professionals, I'm slow to trust providers.



Understanding that the healing and body sovereignty work I am doing takes time and it will be done in a timeframe that suits my body, mind, and spirit and the healing work I do with my Ancestors.



You, as a medical provider in the western science tradition, are one person in a group of many people that I access in supporting my healing and wellness goals.



Understanding that weight and weight loss will NEVER be a significant part of my health and wellness goals nor is weight (including BMI) or weight loss to be used as an indicator of health or health and wellness outcomes. **Please respect this part of my journey.**



Understanding that dieting and weight loss surgery will NEVER be an intervention that I will consider. These interventions are not in-line with my health and wellness philosophy or my body sovereignty project. **Please respect this decision and never talk to me about these interventions.**



Understanding that as someone in eating disorder recovery, my relationship to food and eating is very complex and fraught with anxiety, fear, and high emotions. There are a few people that I feel comfortable talking about food and nutrition with and they are people who I know well, respect, and have found will not trigger disordered eating habits. **Please do not ask me about eating or food unless I bring it up. You have not proven to be someone I can trust with that part of me.**



Understanding that I will not tolerate any kind of body shaming, fat-shaming, body policing, or food policing from ANYONE in my life and that includes you as a medical provider. If any of these types of oppressive actions are directed to me I will quickly address it and may leave the visit or situation if I am able to. Or if I cannot leave the situation, for example being in the hospital, I will respectfully, but firmly ask you to leave. If you are unsure what body shaming, fat shaming, body policing, or food policing is I encourage you do educate yourself. There are many resources available on-line.

BODY SOVEREIGNTY



What are your needs & expectations?

MY BODY SOVEREIGNTY PROJECT

This section is specific to me and you can use this section to talk about any healing practices that you participate in, if any. You can always take this section out too.



This project has come out of one of the worst times of my life in graduate school when I was in a deep, dark hole of depression and I just wanted to give up. I was given the choice to keep doing nothing and suffering, ending it all, or building a solid foundation of self-healing out of the rubble of my life. I choose self-healing.

The project has three parts:

- 1. my relationship with food and eating,**
- 2. my relationships with my body, being embodied, and movement**
- 3. healing from sexual trauma.**

Within those three categories, and they all mix together, I participate in acts of self-love, self-healing, liberation, and survivance. Some examples would be buying food, preparing a meal, and eating a meal with my friends. Art work plays a huge roll in this project and right now I'm working on an art series called Fat Femme Cheyenne Warrior Regalia. It has been shown in gallery spaces twice and right now I have created a fat femme war club and a fat femme breastplate. Another example is giving presentations and writing about my body sovereignty project.

If healing is to occur this project must be ACTION BASED. It's not enough to thinking it or feel it, it must be some kind of movement or task or creation or physical experience.

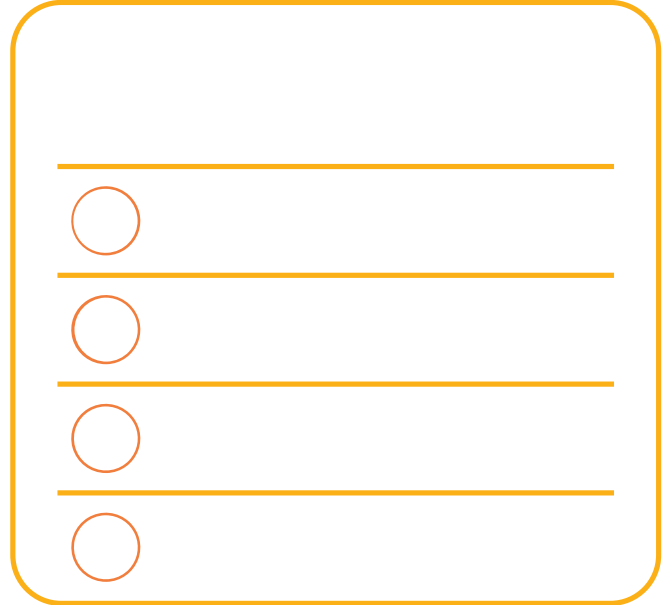


My Talents, Skills, & Resources

- I am a warrior.
- I am an active member of the urban Indian, queer, academic, and fat activist communities in Portland and across Turtle Island.
- I have lots of supportive friends and family members in all the different communities I am a part of.
- I have a great sense of humor, am thoughtful, smart, strategic, and able to vision.
- I am loving and caring. Building and maintaining relationships with people and between people is probably my greatest talent.
- I'm well educated with a bachelors degree in Art Practices and a masters in Adult Education and Learning.
- I love being outdoors and nature is so revitalizing to me.
- Native community is where my heart is and where I ground myself in this chaotic, post-apocalyptic existence, and where I pull for wisdom and direction in my life. Queer community is where I've learned to be more bold and outspoken and not take shit from anyone and be myself and do what I want. Fat community gives me the strength to love myself as I am and fight against all the oppressive forces that try to consume me and make me hate myself.

Other Providers/Practitioners in my Health & Wellness Journey

You could put information here about a mental health therapist, a massage therapist, a personal trainer, a spiritual/religious practitioner, etc.




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My Health & Wellness Goals

- Be more active in my body/Embodiment:
- Swimming in River: summer
- Personal Training:
 - Just started

Yours will be entirely unique to you!



A rounded rectangular box with an orange border containing four horizontal lines for text entry. Each line is preceded by a small orange circle, serving as a bullet point or a placeholder for a goal.



Thanks again to Shilo George, Lush Runtux Tumtum Consulting, LLC, for sharing this with us and our network of Indigiqueer relatives!



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For more resources, visit
2S-SupportBoat.org
theravencollective.org