If you do not wish this session to be recorded, please private message one of the presenters: Alekhya, Claudia, Erin, or Jenna
Introduction

Welcome to the Barnard Zine Library & Teaching, Learning, and Digital Scholarship department!
It seems like there is a binary right now: Trust/Believe Science! OR “I did my own research” where “own research”=searched Google

Power in observations, personal reports, journaling, our own metrics

Science is produced by humans, corporations and other interests with biases and different motivations

Science has often been wielded to oppress groups of people
Evidence Based Medicine Pyramid

- Meta-Analyses
- Systematic Reviews
- Randomised Controlled Trials
- Cohort Studies
- Case Reports
- Background Information / Expert Opinion

Filtered Information

Unfiltered Information
What is the purpose of a case report?

A case report is a detailed report of the symptoms, signs, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of an individual patient. Case reports usually describe an unusual or novel occurrence and as such, remain one of the cornerstones of medical progress and provide many new ideas in medicine.

To me, case reports actually seem like they should be considered extremely relevant and high priority.
Honoring Observation and Questions

What does it mean to honor our own observations and questions about health, nature, and other areas of science when experience is often devalued?

Journal about observations over time
Track publicly or privately
Ask questions
Look at examples
Case Reports in HIV/AIDS
How to have sex in an epidemic zine
Self reporting with Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)
The only time I have seen much discussion of PMDD in popular culture was on an episode of the show Taxi, which aired in 1983.
Appearance of Spring Peepers

We’re HERE!
Observation of Spiral Jetty

I’m HERE!
Relevant Zines!

Wade, Carrie. Evidence-based Practice: Can Medicine Be Unbiased?  
https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/15437029

https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/11905522

Non Grata, Alicia Take back your life: A wimmin's guide to alternative health care.  
https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/4783043

Little, Nicole Elizabeth Ounjian. A Hastily Assembled Guide to Climate Disaster.  
https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/15199154
PLUS SIGNS

sarah wood
Plus Sighs: An Introduction

- Sarah Wood: queer, fat illustrator/writer from Michigan
- Author of many zines
- Plus Sighs: looking at what it means to be fat and queer
- Presentation: focusing in on her perspective on fatness & health, and institutional anti-fat bias
- Content Warning: fatphobia, mental health
- Social Media
  - Instagram: @guwanciale
  - Tumblr: https://woodsarah.tumblr.com/
  - heysarahwood@gmail/com
There is so much I have to say about being fat, about growing up fat, that I haven't found the words for yet. How it warps the way you see yourself, how you see others, your relationship with your body, with food, with how you let other people treat you. It rots your brain.

And because we still have doctors going on TV and saying that it's fine to starve your kids, fine to shame them, fine to send them to fat camp and encourage them to develop eating disorders, the brain rot persists.

Hating fat bodies becomes so normal and intrinsic that even when you think you've learned to practice body positivity and reject diet culture and wear shorts in public, that brain rot is still in your head. But you have absolutely no language to talk about it, because society has taught you that this is normal, and furthermore that talking about it would just make thin people uncomfortable.

I have so much to say about growing up fat and all the thing that a fatphobic upbringing took from me, all the ways that it warped me. But I'm still learning the language. I'm still learning what is and isn't normal, healthy, real, or perceived. I feel like once I learn how to really start talking about it, I'll never be able to stop.

This is where I start trying to talk about it.

Sarah Wood
But what about your health?

1. The health of strangers is never your business.
2. You would never say that to a thin girl eating a Big Mac while she binge drinks & never exercises.
3. 1/3-3/4 of people classified as obese are metabolically healthy.
4. All available research shows that fat-shaming makes people unhealthier.
5. Health is not an indicator of worth.

If you really cared about fat people's health, consider that...
Institutional Anti-Fat Bias

- Doctors can refuse to treat patients above a certain weight
- Poor wages
- Fat patients receive low quality health care
- Absolutely terrible physical education
- Food deserts
- "Obesity epidemic"
- Insurance providers don't cover dieticians
PART ONE: THE GENDER OF FATNESS

The more weight I lose, the more I start to think about gender.

As a fat kid, my body was a contradiction: both conventional and queer.

My big chest and round face reinforced my femininity, but my large frame and plus-size clothing alienated me from other girls in my grade.

my fatness excluded me from both masculinity and femininity alike.

Sarah Wood
WEIGHT STIGMA

has a huge impact on a person's gender expression.

I think that's why I felt so averse to gender while growing up: neither femininity nor masculinity felt safe to explore, so I avoided both.

- BMI limits for transition procedures
- Medical bias against fat people
- Fatness reinforces secondary sex characteristics
- Gendered expectations for fat bodies
- Fatphobia in the LGBTQ community

Sarah Wood
My Mad Fat Diary
Rae is a 16-year-old fat girl trying to navigate friendship, family, boys, and body image, all while working to recover from an eating disorder and mental health issues. It's one of my favorite shows—funny, heartwarming, emotional, and a little bit horny. I'm grateful I was able to catch it while I was still in high school—a lot of the lessons she learns from her therapist are lessons I still need to learn.

Work In Progress
This darkly comedic show stars Abby, a 43-year-old self-proclaimed "fat, queer dyke," announcing to her therapist that if her life doesn't improve over the next 6 months, she's going to take her own life. What follows is an incredibly funny, touching, and well-written show that touches on forgephobia, mental illness, queerness, and sexuality. There's also a Weird Al cameo. It's an incredibly authentic show and I can't wait for the second season to come out.

Shrill
It's so incredibly cathartic to see a fat woman getting to confront the people that make her miserable: an internet troll, a tel-photid doctor, or a boyfriend that takes her for granted. While Annie learns to advocate for herself against her boss, her boyfriend, and society as a whole, her roommate Fran is the ultimate fat, black, lesbian, sinner scene-stealer.

Happy Fat
My introduction to fat positivity. Thoughts, feelings, and honesty. Also includes interviews from other fat activists.

Fat and Queer
A diverse collection of essays and poems focusing on the intersectionality of fatness and queerness.

Maintenance Phase
A podcast hosted by Audrey Gordon and Michael Heathers that dives into the world of diet culture and anti-fat practices, such as Weight Watchers, Dr. Oz, The Master Cleanse, and celery juice. I also highly recommend their episode on the shocking prevalence and underdiagnosis of eating disorders among fat people.
Trying #4 (2010) by LB

A perzine about burnout, emotional labor & distress in Chicago public schools, dental surgery body horror and seasonal depression.
At the time, LB (they/them) was an overworked, under-resourced Chicago public school teacher - burn-out eventually gave way to psychosomatic symptoms including vision loss & tooth loss.

We confess about our fears of passing out on the commute home. We confess to knowing that exhaustion will wear our bodies and minds out, will eventually kill us.

“And the crazy thing is, is that I still actually like this job. Through it all. I still do.” We both say it. We both convince ourselves.

Occasionally I feel like I am making a difference in this world filled with indifference. Then I wonder if I put up with this job because deep down I hate myself and am willing to put up with the pain and the disrespect and humiliation and shame for trying.

I am the teacher with food on clothes 4 times a week, 31 teeth, a lisp and a dandruff problem. This year, that is me, and I don’t care.
I tried to make eye contact as I said, “You are a good person. Please believe in yourself.”

She started seeing the counselor at school. She started receiving help and made a mural to educate others on major depressive disorder and made a presentation to announce she had finally overcome it after years of suffering. I clapped, and held my words in mouth, unable to ruin her moment by declaring that you never get over it. You will always be in a battle with your doubts and this world.

I was happy when I look up from my stack of final papers.

“Ms. B, I just wanted to let you know… that you were my favorite teacher ever,” she finished the sentence right before she bursts into tears. I was shocked and would have never expected this declaration from this stone-faced student who looked as if she dreaded seeing my presence at 7:30 am every day. I lacked the energy this year, the sadness made it harder to give my full effort in the class. I told myself that I had been a shitty teacher for half of the year and furthered the sadness. A student’s tears over moving on to the next year had never happened to me before. All of this was news to me.

“Are you ok?” was all I could ask. “Are you ok?”

“Yes, yes, I’m ok.”

She said she was leaving but you’re not leaving the school. I’ll still be here.

As we wrapped up our reading of As I Lay Dying, a student decided to write, “As I Stand Living” on her hand with permanent marker.

Perfect.
My body has betrayed me with the breasts that I must push down daily, the necklines like tree trunks, the vertigo from only five hours of sleep, and the oppression from not seeing the sun in four months.

At night I—

I am so used to taking care of others that I forgot how to take care of myself.

I took inventory of others stories of seasonal depression during the winter.

"I couldn't get out of bed or even talk for days."

"I have never drank so much in my life."

"I cannot leave the house."

Every conversation I baited people with saying we are all affected by depression this winter. Later into the winter, I added that the depression has shifted into all out rage. Some sympathized, expressing their own sadness and I felt understood for a second. I felt that I would be ok and we would be ok. The shared

And every winter I argue that it makes us stronger, tougher than other cities with shutdown infrastructures and casual shoes. But this winter did not make me stronger. It made me feel desperate and exposed, oppressed under the weight of anxiety and depression. Already having a tenuous relationship with depression, this winter pushed me over the edge.
burning the stem of my esophagus; and, thus for five years I chewed gallon on the two dollar and twenty five cents train to work and two Februarys ago I heard a crack in my mouth and found a chip of my tooth that I just thought was a leftover peanut from last night’s habitual snacking and I ignored it like I ignored everything in my life besides anxiety and work and I lost a tooth from anxiety and fear. I lost a tooth from stress and depression. I lost a tooth and smiled crookedly and taught with a lisp and freaked out my students with the stitches and spat out onto the overhead projector with dribbles of saliva for all to see. And I lost a tooth and I lost it all.

I did not get a new tooth. I got more bone implanted into my gums, a screw drilled into my jaw, more stitches all along my gums and a list of food I could not eat. 3 more months with an open root canal and 5 other cavities need to be filled. 3 more months with a gaping smile, tooth aches and the inability to pronounce certain words.

I had bragged to my students about receiving the new tooth over break. When I returned to the front of the class with a swollen face and difficulty talking out of the right side of my mouth, they said nothing.
I cannot even express to my closest friends.
And now summer is here. I sit in my backyard with burned barbeque items. I sit on the beach and try to not fear the winter. I hear the screams of goals from world cup games echoing throughout out my street.
I want all of the days.

In writing, I look for a narrative. I look for an end. There will be no end with this. There will always be a winter. There will always be the sadness. There will always be the struggle.

It is now just realizing about what matters and how to continue onward and upwards, working on fighting the nothingness. Working on not causing harm; working on making meaning; working on making change.

This was written during the first week of summer for the Philadelphia Feminist Zine Fest because if there are two things that have impacted my life the most it would be feminism and zines. And it gave me a space to be honest about issues I cannot even express to my closest friends.

And now summer is here. I sit in my backyard with burned barbeque items. I sit on the beach and try to not fear the winter. I hear the screams of goals from world cup games echoing throughout out my street.
I want all of the days.

thank you ♡•✨❤️!
Dilemma: lack of info, useless doctors and even nurses
Stigma
Read it yourself, don't just buy it for your mom
What's missing: trans experiences (which I didn't think to see out at the time, 2014), few BIPOC contributions, no early menopause stories
This is a print-only zine, not even held in our library
Peri/menopause zines in our library
I was sautéing onions when it happened: a sudden, unfamiliar, decidedly unpleasant warmth in my chest, which quickly suffused my face and neck. Dizzy and light-headed, I turned off the flame and stumbled across the kitchen, where I collapsed onto a stool.

We need to share info and de-stigmatize it. I like to just say “Menopause!” really loud in public spaces every once in a while. No joke. Try it.

Kelly Keigwen in *Krissy Durden*’s contribution

Kate Haas

Carrie McNinch

Jude Vachon
Are You There, God? It's Me, Menopause

The women of my family can't tell me about menopause. My oma had two daughters, family legend has it that as the orderlies wheeled her up surgery, I felt a lot like I did in the days before my menarche - doomed, and also feeling slightly left out of a group I am not sure I want to join. But in all my years as a human woman, bound by space and time, I have learned that the quickest way to feel totally crazy is to presume that I have control over any corner of the universe. I am going to practice giving up any idea of control. Maybe I will get to run away, as suggested by Susan Weed. Also, I am going to put a general call out to my ancestors, to send me all the help and information I need. Want to be a kick ass crone? But it's kinda scary.
Questions and Comments

-Away questions and comments in the chat!

-Additional comments and questions!

-We will pause recording to keep conversation private
Idea generation template

Observation:

Prior knowledge

Other observation

Question?

Question?

Idea
Observation: I thought I heard the chorus of spring peepers in Prospect Park the other night, but it seems early.

Question? Can the spring peepers enter and exit suspended animation as the weather changes?

Question? Is it early? Or was it normal?

Question? How is climate change influencing hibernation and migration habits?

Spring peepers enter a state of suspended animation in the winter.

Other observation: How can I observe more? What’s my metric?

Idea
Turning the template into a zine

I think the zine could be a journal for keeping observations and metrics over time.

A public zine would be a good way to enter your own observations into the public conversation without having to present a formal conclusion.

A record of observations useful for benchmarking.

Can include a privacy notice about whether you want the zine circulated by a library or not.
Citations & resources

- **zines AND (health* OR scien* OR technolog* OR engineer* OR math*)**
- Excerpts from “The Gender of Fatness” Taken from Sarah Wood’s Instagram (@guwanciale)
- **Trying #4** by LB
- **Zine-making template**
- [https://zines.barnard.edu](https://zines.barnard.edu)
- Follow up with Jenna & Claudia: [zines@barnard.edu](mailto:zines@barnard.edu)
- Next zine library event **Leave Comic Sans Alone: Exploring Accessibility and Zine Making**