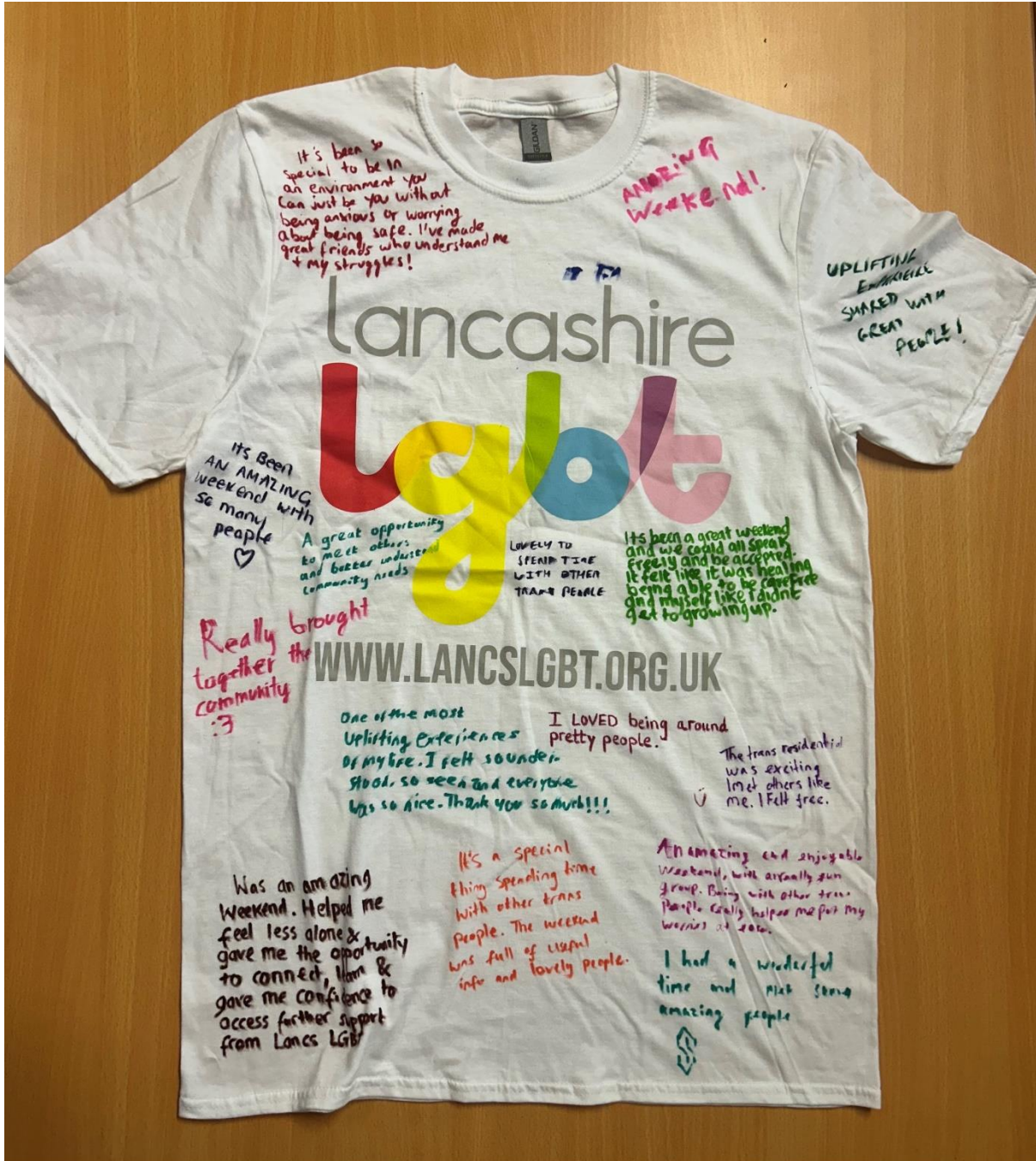




LANCASHIRE LGBT TRANS AND GENDER
DIVERSE RESIDENTIAL
BORWICK HALL, 26TH-27TH OCTOBER 2024





Lancashire LGBT T-shirt signed by delegates of the 2024 Trans and Gender Diverse Residential

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Introduction

The Trans and Gender Diverse Residential is an activity provided by Lancashire LGBT for the local Trans and Gender Diverse community. This residential was the 6th hosted by Lancashire LGBT and the 5th hosted in Borwick Hall in Carnforth, Lancashire¹.

Background

The first Trans and Gender Diverse Residential was held at Alston Hall in Preston, Lancashire in 2014². The following three residential weekends were held in 2015-2018 and were funded by the Big Lottery as part of the With Out Barriers project (WOB), aimed at reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans (LGBTQ+) people. In 2019 a further trans residential was held which was funded by the National Lottery Awards for All.

The need for a residential

The need for a residential event for trans and gender diverse (TGD) people was identified during delivery and evaluation of a Big Lottery funded project called The Isaac Hitchen Project (from 2012-2015). This was the first pan-Lancashire large project focused on improving LGBT people's mental health and well-being, social inclusion and involvement in local communities in Lancashire.

During this time, clear evidence emerged that the needs of TGD people were different from LGB people. For example, trans people were significantly more likely to need referrals to specialist counselling than LGB people and trans people benefited from trans peer support groups as sources of affirmation, information and friendship networks. The key learning from the evaluation of the Isaac Hitchen Project was that there was a need for specific support service for TGD people of all ages as well as for those supporting trans people - both professionals as well as family members.

All previous residential weekends demonstrated a significant positive impact on delegates' mental health and well-being and were life-changing for some. For example, out of the 22 delegates who attended the 2018 residential:

- 91% reported being better informed about Gender Reassignment
- 96% reported feeling less isolated
- 96% reported increased confidence and self-esteem

¹ Borwick Hall is owned by Lancashire County Council, used for residential weekends and is very good value for money!

² Alston Hall was also owned by Lancashire County Council at the time.



2018 residential delegates and staff pictured outside Borwick Hall

The current Trustees of Lancashire LGBT agreed that using some of the charity reserves, we should host another trans residential weekend in 2024 – particularly because in the last 5 years we have witnessed a significant increase in hostility towards trans people (in particular, trans women) from:

- Mainstream media
- Politicians
- Organised so-called 'gender critical' groups

All of these have had a very negative impact on the TGD people who we have been supporting over this time, in terms of their mental health and well-being, confidence in being in public spaces, self-esteem and hopes for the future.

Residential Overview

This Trans and Gender Diverse Residential was hosted in Borwick Hall, Carnforth on the 26-27th October. It was attended by 18 delegates and facilitated by the residential team. During the residential, delegates attended a series of workshops which covered topics in mental health, wellbeing, gender identity and healthcare³.

Residential team

This residential was planned by Lancashire LGBT staff, Lewis Turner, Levi Gibbs and Didier Muller. The residential was enhanced by support of our volunteers: Dannii, Reuban, Beth and Riley as well as Jennifer and Bradley, the Leeds Gender Service Gender Outreach Workers.



Lewis Turner, Chief Executive



Levi Gibbs, Support Worker



Didier Muller, Programme Coordinator



³ Workshop topics were voted for by the residential delegates when booking a place on the residential. The workshop topics with the most votes were the workshops delivered over the residential weekend.

Beth, Volunteer



Riley, Volunteer

Dannii, Volunteer



Bradley, Gender Outreach Worker

Reuban, Volunteer



Jennifer Simpson-Hoyle, Gender Outreach Worker

Workshop leaders – in order of appearance⁴

The workshops were delivered by the residential team and two workshop leaders: James Wilson (Leeds Gender Service), and Maggi Stratford (Vocal Coach).



James Wilson- Lead Professional, Leeds Gender Service



Maggi Stratford- Voice Coach

⁴ A third workshop leader was unable to attend due to family emergency. This workshop was going to be a makeup workshop for Trans women. The workshop leader provided information packs which were distributed to those who were hoping to attend this workshop by email.

Workshops summary

Feedback from previous residential weekends has shown that people prefer more workshops than social time– so we spread the workshops over 1.5 days, with delegates arriving on the Saturday morning and leaving on Sunday late afternoon. This also meant that by the time of the social time in the evening, people had been together all day, so it was easier to socialise.

The residential began on Saturday with an induction workshop led by Lewis and Levi. In this workshop, delegates took part in ice breakers and were asked to write down their hopes and fears onto post-it-notes which were shared on a board and set ground rules for the weekend as a group. This workshop was followed by 'Leeds Gender Service discuss the Care Pathway' which was facilitated by James, Jenny and Bradley. In the afternoon, delegates attended either a 'Hormone workshop' with James or a 'Trans Masculine voice workshop' with Maggi. The first day closed with a 'Trans Masculine workshop' with Lewis and Bradley and a 'Trans Feminine voice workshop' with Maggi.

Delegates started the second day of the residential by attending either a myth-busting workshop on 'Gender Recognition Certificates' with Lewis or a 'Non-Binary workshop' led by Reuban with Dannii and Levi. This was followed by a 'Coping skills for gender dysphoria workshop' led by Levi, Beth and Riley. The weekend ended with a final meeting for all delegates and the residential team. During this meeting, delegates were invited to reflect on their experience and complete feedback forms. Following the departure of delegates, the residential team held a final debrief before heading home.

Schedule

SATURDAY		
10 am	Arrival and registration	
11.am	Welcome Suite 1	
12.00	Lunch	
12.45 WORKSHOPS	Suite 1 Leeds Gender Service: James (Lead Professional) and Gender Outreach Workers discuss the care pathway and Q&A	
2.00	Tea/coffee break	
2.30 WORKSHOPS	Suite 1 Hormone workshop with James from Leeds Gender Service	Suite 2 Trans masc voice workshop Maggi Stratford
3.45	Tea/coffee break	
4.15 WORKSHOPS	Suite 1 Trans femme voice workshop Maggi Stratford	Suite 2 Trans men/trans masc workshop (topic TBC) Lewis and Bradley Annexe Non-binary workshop Reuban and Dannii/Levi
5.30	Evening meal	
6.30 onwards	Free time: Creative table for LGBTQ+ History exhibit, art, board games, music, socialising - whatever you want to do!	

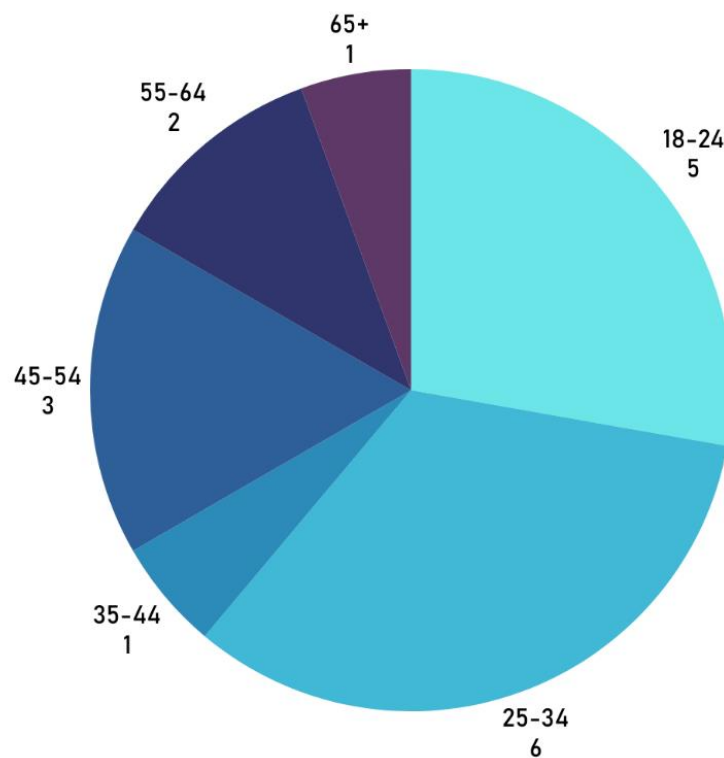
SUNDAY		
7.45 -8.30	Breakfast	
9.00 WORKSHOPS	Suite 1 Gender Recognition Certificates: Myths Versus reality Lewis	Suite 2 Non-binary workshop Reuban and Dannii/Levi
10.30	Tea/coffee break	
11.00 WORKSHOPS	Suite 1 Coping skills for gender dysphoria Levi, Beth and Riley	
12.30.PM	Lunch	
1.15pm	Suite 1 Final meeting	
2.30pm	Departure	

Delegates

This trans residential was attended by 18 delegates. The delegates were diverse in age and evenly split in terms of gender identity⁵. Over half of the delegates live in Central and North Lancashire, with a minority living in East Lancashire and Blackpool. Nearly all delegates who attended the residential are currently receiving support from Lancashire LGBT or had received support from Lancashire LGBT in the past⁶.

Demographics

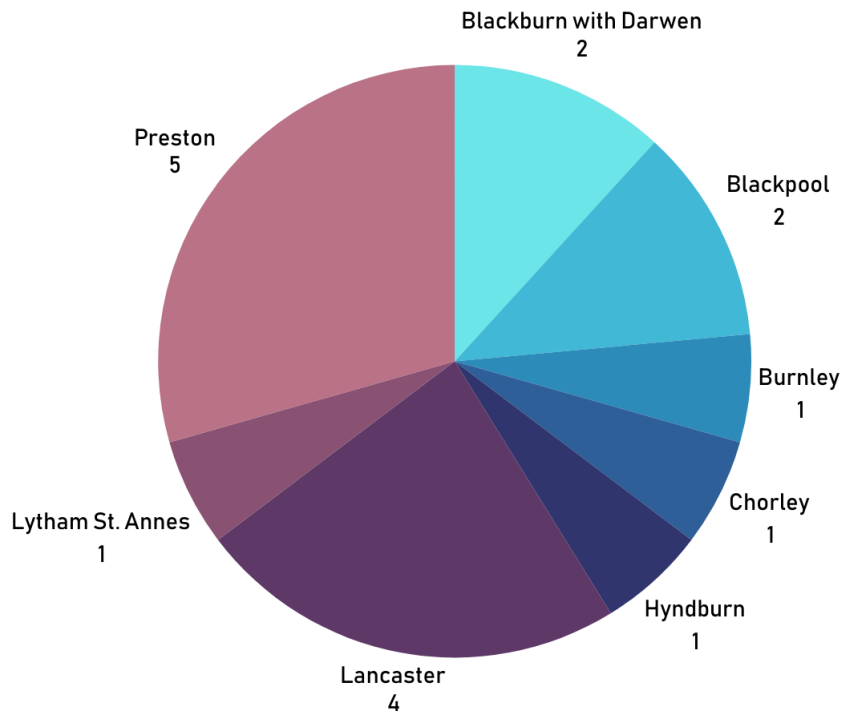
Age



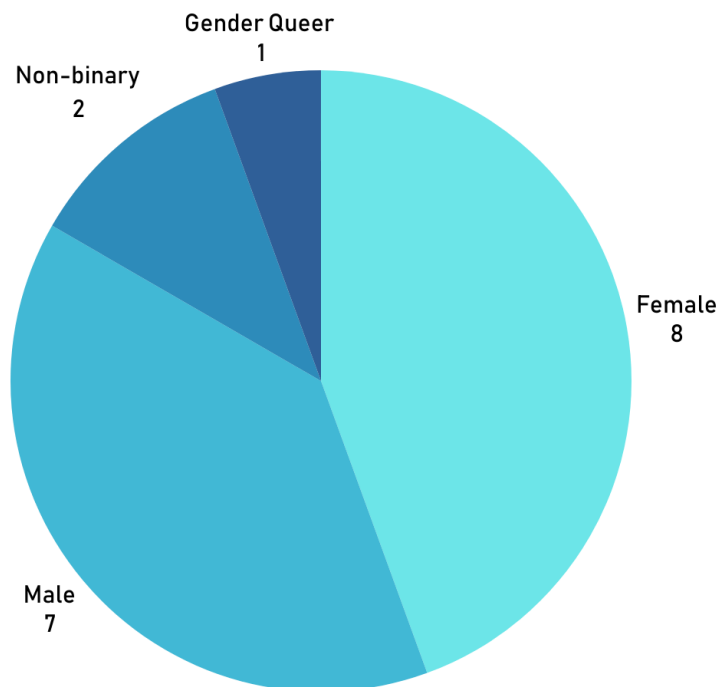
⁵ This even split was between the categories of 'Male' and 'Female'. Two delegates identified as non-binary and 1 delegate identified as Gender Queer.

⁶ Lancashire LGBT service users were given priority when bookings for the residential opened. Bookings were open to the public some weeks later.

Area



Gender



Hopes and fears

During the introductory workshop, Delegates were asked to write down a list of hopes and fears for the residential. Below are two word-clouds representing the key words which delegates used to describe their hopes and fears. In summary, delegates were most hopeful for making friends and learning new things and were most afraid of feeling anxious and being alone.

Hopes:



Fears



Outcomes

This residential produced a set of positive outcomes.

- 100% of delegates had a positive experience of the residential
- 90% of delegates believed that the residential had boosted their confidence and self-esteem
- 95% of delegates felt connected with other delegates
- 80% of delegates learnt more about themselves
- 70% of delegates had a better sense of identity

Overall outcomes

These outcomes reflect the scores given by delegates for the overall residential. The scores were converted to an overall percentage.

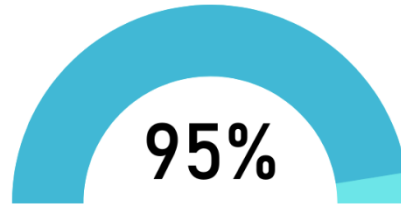
Overall, I had a positive experience of residential



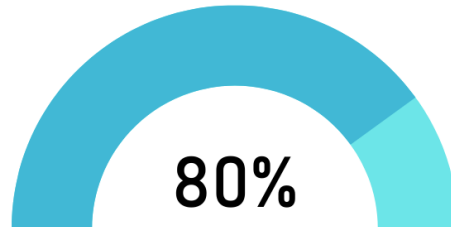
The residential boosted my confidence and self-esteem



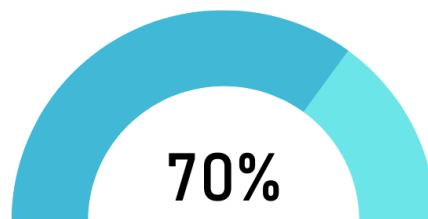
I felt connected with other delegates



I learnt more about myself



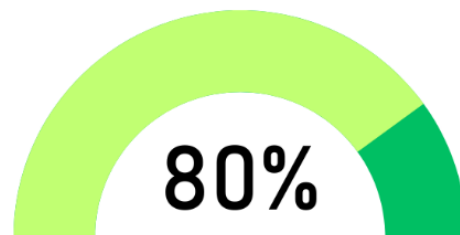
Better sense of my identity



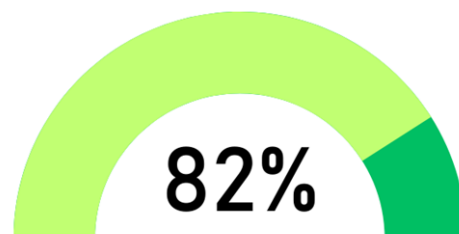
Workshop scores

These outcomes reflect the scores given by delegates for the workshops they attended during the residential. The scores were converted to an overall percentage/overall satisfaction rating.

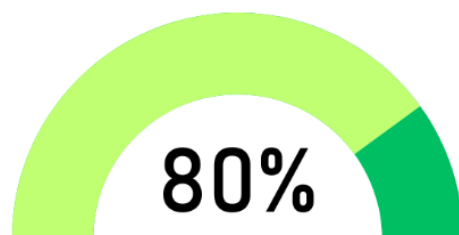
Leeds Gender Service



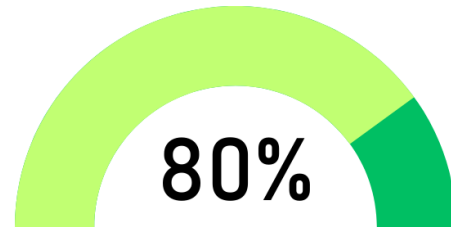
Voice workshop (M+F)



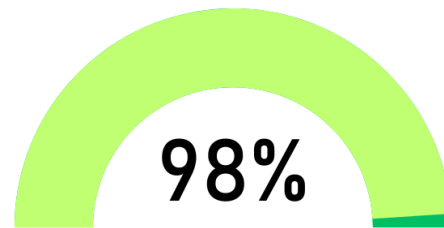
Trans Masculine workshop



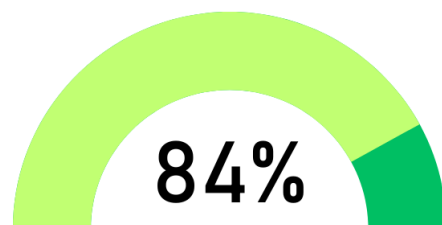
Non-binary workshop



Gender recognition workshop



Coping skills for Gender Dysphoria



Testimonials

“One of the most spiritually and mentally fulfilling experiences of my life. I felt understood by everyone and affirmed that my feelings were ok”

““I feel more relaxed and affirmed in my identity, knowing that I don’t have to be and feel alone. It also has been reassuring to know that everyone has had the same thoughts and feelings at some point- hearing everyone’s stories has been immensely valuable. It has assured me that I can have a future and live normally!”

“I feel less alone. It’s been great to speak to others who are also trans. I feel more confident to access further help and knowledgeable about what is out there”

"I can't explain how much it has meant to meet trans people who live in my area"

"It has been really nice to spend time with other trans people. It has helped me to feel better connected, less isolated and I really feel it has broken down barriers to doing more with Lancashire LGBT- nice to meet people face to face"

"I have made new friends, I didn't have any queer friends before"

Photos





Borwick Hall: a poem written by a residential delegate

*And they are like the extended family,
You only ever meet on special occasions.
The kind who need a little patience,
To adjust their voices,
As they crackle,
And wobble,
And jump higher than intended,
When a sneeze,
Or a laugh escapes from their bodies.
Their faces are beginning to take on,
Facial hair,
Sprouting in patches,
As their body shifts,
Into something they can live in.
Something they can breathe in.
Voice settling in chests,
And projected into rooms,
Where they are finally heard,
Considered and respected too.
It is the trans women able to gush,
About flowing dresses,
And adjusting bra straps,
Walking in heels,
That they were born to walk in.
It is a room of young and old,
Everything in between,
Where non binary peoples,
Pronouns are never questioned,
And everybody fits in!
It is a room where laughter echoes,
Top-tips are swapped,
And everybody has company.
The weekend in this room,
Stretches into other parts of the building too.
Annexes filled with noise,
From a voice coach and her students.
Rooms where feelings are never skirted around,
But rather welcomed into the room.
Validated,
Reassured,
And broke down,
Echoes of "You can do that!",*

*And explanations of "this is how-".
It is a building,
Where people slink off to bedrooms,
For time to decompress,
A day of being believed in,
Understood,
And their identities aren't put to test.
It is a place,
For trans women,
To sit with cuppas,
And breathe.
A place for non binary people,
To express themselves openly.
Pronoun badges,
Preventing the repeated,
"It's they/them please!"
It is surrounded by nature,
By long stretches of canals,
For trans men to wander around,
In groups,
Like the childhood they never had,
Of just being young goofy lads.
It is a safe bubble,
A break from a world,
Where nobody quite understands,
The waiting lists stunt every plan,
And the windows,
Seem to rattle,
And the doors seem to crash,
And the walls begin to close in,
And you think there's no helping hand.
It's a place to stay,
Safe from the storm.
To recharge,
Before going back out,
Into the big wide world.
Saying:
**"This is me.
And it is exactly who,
I was supposed to be."***