

***The two loves of my life* - Group for international gay and queer men**

Many international gay and queer men move to Berlin for a better and freer life. The big and liberal city offers us a wide range of possibilities to explore lifestyle and sexuality in a way that is difficult or even dangerous elsewhere.

Although we have left our home country behind, we continue to carry parts of it inside: our mother tongue, traditions, beliefs, what a good life is, what community means and how we find our place in it. Family and friends back home continue to play a role in our lives.

To combine our “old” life with our “new” life as a gay or queer man in Berlin can be complicated. We are torn between conflicting expectations from others and ourselves. A common result is the feeling of not belonging completely in either place; or a feeling of being a stranger to oneself, of having lost something without having gained anything new. We struggle to keep the two worlds apart or look for ways to reconcile them.

Being a “border crosser” and a “double outsider” takes a lot of effort and energy. Many of us experience self-doubt and feelings of guilt or shame. Despite having “two loves of our lives” we can feel vulnerable and lonely.

We invite gay and queer men from international backgrounds to meet and share with other men with similar experiences. The group provides a safe space to talk about who we are, where we belong and how we want to live our lives.

The group meets weekly. Group membership is limited to a maximum of 10 participants. Regular attendance for at least 6 months is expected from anyone who would like to participate. Beyond this time, each participant can stay for as long as they wish. When the group is full, new members can only be accepted if a member decides to leave the group. All these conditions are important to develop trusting relationships and a stable, safe framework in which an open exchange can take place.

There is a waiting list for the group. When new spots are available, new candidates are invited to an introductory interview to find out if the group is a suitable offer.

When: Every Monday at 7:00-8:30 pm.

Where: Schwulenberatung Berlin, Hermannstraße 256-258 (U7 Hermannplatz)

Language: The group is led in English. The group leaders also speak German, Spanish, Norwegian and some Russian and Arabic.

Contact: Interested persons can write an e-mail to Oyvind R. Haugen (oyvind.r.haugen@protonmail.com)

Conductors:

Oyvind R. Haugen: Norwegian psychologist who works in the field of inter-cultural psychological counseling and expat coaching.

Jens Preil, MD PhD: Border crosser between East and West Germany, group therapy and team coaching, executive and private practitioner.