

Interview with Laura MacIntosh

SESSION 1 (7/9/2020)

Timed Log

[00:00:33] Personal Background—born in Ontario in 1978, moved a lot as a child, houses were always in a state of construction, personal pronouns (they, them), middle class family, was the family scapegoat, entrepreneur parents

[00:09:38] Often felt displaced as a child, distanced from parents, had an ear infection and medication injury as a toddler. Described their experience growing up with negligent parents

[00:16:44] Earliest memory of illness and sensitivity—sensitive to Aerosol Lysol. They had strep throat at eighteen. Mother smoked in the house. Due to their relationship, parents didn't know of their illness

[00:22:57] Kicked out of parent's home at eighteen, felt more free than sad, started taking care of themselves more by getting regular doctors' checkups, dental care, etc. Worked minimum wage jobs after high school.

[00:26:11] Getting sick at eighteen, finding out they had MCS from the internet, experience with medical professionals, getting formally tested and qualifying for Disability Support Program, advocating for themselves at doctors' offices

[00:44:42] Navigating the medical system as a genderqueer person—easier to not make it known that they are genderqueer person

[00:46:51] Initially dealt with MCS by avoidance.

[00:50:45] Family history of illness

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SESSION 2 (7/13/2020)

Timed Log

[00:00:00] Different jobs—restaurant work, housekeeping, being self-employed. On provincial disability support, “locked in violent poverty”, failures of a disability support system

[00:08:22] How class and MCS compound with each other

[00:11:03] How their illness affected their work, had employers who were environmentally conscious, how they advocated for themselves at work

[00:21:06] Being an admin for different chat groups; general support groups, MCS groups—feels good because they know they are not alone but also bad because other people has to go through the same things that they are going through

[00:25:00] How MCS has affected their (romantic) relationships and friendships—asking their partners to accommodate, moving away from relationships where prioritizing accessibility isn’t number one

[00:30:55] Relationship with people who react to chemicals, feeling of camaraderie and recognition

[00:34:02] Getting into art through environmentalism, building a youth magazine in school, making art with garbage

[00:42:35] What developing social housing looks like—raising money, providing a space for disabled people

[00:48:33] How there is not any single aspect of their life that has not been affected by MCS—friendships, dating, career, housing, etc.

[00:52:15] How their gender identity and race has affected their experience—people assume that they are a white woman, using this as an advantage to stand up for people of color

[00:58:35] How they hope our society's relationship with chemicals will change, working together, productive uses of anger