

YOU ARE WELCOME

Rat Park is a live magazine event mixed with a variety show

At its heart is a public discussion about personal things pertaining to the sex lives of gay men, trans women, trans men and other queers that you might find on the apps

Rat Park priorities people in middle age and queer older folks, but everyone is welcome

It aims to explore intimacy, pleasure, addiction, cruising and shame

The catalyst is the current chemsex crisis in London, that is hidden and barely discussed in public forums

This event is an experiment dealing with sensitive issues that are important to our personal lives

It lasts 4 hours with breaks, it is for adults only (18+), it is a sober space and dogs are permitted

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS

This is an experimental community arts event, not a therapy programme

Self-care is the act of looking after yourself and your needs. Feel free to move around the venue at your leisure, you can leave and come back at any time, take a breather when you need it or take 5 minutes and have a strong cuppa

It is impossible to create a genuinely safe space, but we will do our best and ask you to help us do that too

We are hoping for lots of audience participation in the discussions, but you are also welcome to just observe

There is no obligation to reveal anything about your private life. Feel free to make your comments general in order to retain your privacy

On entry you are offered a choice of stickers to wear to communicate your level of openness to discussions with others:

- Red means: 'I'm in a quiet mood today'
- Amber means: 'I am open to sensitive approaches to chat'
- Green means: 'I am confident talking to strangers and talking in public'

Try to notice what stickers other people are wearing, and don't take it personally if someone isn't up for a chat

What is said in the room, stays in the room. Don't disclose the identity of others taking part, or what they have said

We ask that you do not take photos, videos or audio recordings of the event

When talking and listening, be compassionate and patient with yourself, the artists and other punters

Try to be as caring as possible in the things you say and the way you say them. People's lives are made up of all kinds of shitty, complicated, messy and brilliant experiences – do your best not to assume anything about those around you

Rat Park wants to be as inclusive as possible, but is deliberately targeted towards:

Older queens and queers

Those with experience of drug use (casual or sustained). Some of us are sober, some of us are addicts, some of us are in recovery

Sex workers (past and present)

Trans folks (of all persuasions)

People of all faiths, races, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds and migration experiences

People with different kinds of bodies and different experiences of sickness, illness and disability which may or may not be visible

Because of this, we don't want any kinds of actions, language or attitudes that are prejudiced or discriminatory against these groups that might reinforce the kinds of racism, transphobia, misogyny, ageism, classism or other kinds of horrible stuff people already have to put up with

Even if we have the same lived experiences we might not like to use the same words. We can hopefully have some compassion for our similarities and differences, but if someone does or says something that makes you feel a bit upset, angry or wobbly, you can talk to a member of the Rat Park team (who will be identifiable with a badge) and we will do our best to listen and help

COMFORT

There is a mental health first aider present. Andy is available for one-to-one chats if what's going on starts to make you feel a bit wobbly, emotional, stressed, angry or upset. Anyone from the Rat Park team can help you find Andy if you need him

There is a garden with a fire, there is a kitchen with free food and drink

There is a quiet room if you want to get out of the heat

ARTISTS & THEMES

Rat Park is Hosted by Scottee with the Gay Liberacé Front on the old Joanna

You are invited to take part in the creation of the live shrines being created on the main stage by the artist Robin Fucking Whitmore

There are weekly performances from artists-in-residence Neil Bartlett, Rhyss' Piece's & Zack Mennel

The weekly guests include writers, artists, health workers, sex workers, geezers, divas, poets, DJs, club promoters, dragsters and experts on the homosexual situation

Each Saturday has a theme in this series of four events:

Saturday 1 February

BLOOD

Matthew Todd

Asad Zafar

Ignacio Labayen de Inza

3 Songs from Frank Bertoletti

Saturday 8 February

TEARS

Kit Green

Jim Warboy

Marc Thompson

3 Songs from Kit Green

Saturday 15 February

PISS

Ajamu

Keith Jarrett

Jackson King

3 Songs from David McAlmont

Saturday 22 February

SPUNK

Stewart Who

Jamie HP

Julian Yang

3 Songs from Shirley Bassey

SIGNPOSTING

Antidote the queer drugs agency will be present every week, and there are leaflets for various support services

Here are some services that be useful to you:

Antidote

020 7833 1674 / antidote@londonfriend.org.uk / londonfriend.org.uk/antidote

LGBT Switchboard

0800 0119 100 / hello@switchboard.lgbt / switchboard.lgbt

Controlling Chemsex

controllingchemsex.com

Club Drug Clinic

clubdrugclinic.cnwl.nhs.uk

Terrence Higgins Trust

0808 802 1221 / tth.org.uk

Hep C Trust

hepctrust.org.uk

NA

0300 999 1212 / meetings@ukna.org / www.ukna.org

AA

0800 9177650 / help@aamail.org / www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

CMA

info@crystalmeth.org.uk / www.crystalmeth.org.uk

CA

0208 007 1130 / helpline@ca-london.org / www.ca-london.org

Mind Out

mindout.org.uk

Survivors UK

020 3322 1860 / survivorsuk.org / help@survivorsuk.org