

PROCESS BOOK

# UnErased | The Human Story

- Fiona, Priyanka, Manasi & Vishwajeet | Design People Society, Fall 2017





# Transgender | trans·gen·der | trans'jendər, tranz'jendər

*adjective*

Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.

# Transgender Community

Transgender people come from all walks of life. We are dads and moms, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. We are your coworkers, and your neighbors. We are 7-year-old children and 70-year-old grandparents. We are a diverse community, representing all racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as faith backgrounds.

The word “transgender” – or trans – is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to us at birth. Although the word “transgender” and our modern definition of it only came into use in the late 20th century, people who would fit under this definition have existed in every culture throughout recorded history.

Housing & Homelessness:

[www.transequality.org/issues](http://www.transequality.org/issues)

Safety Issues among Youth & Students:

[www.transequality.org/issues/youth-students](http://www.transequality.org/issues/youth-students)

Safety within the Community:

[www.tsroadmap.com/early/safety](http://www.tsroadmap.com/early/safety)

Regarding Bathroom Access:

[www.transequality.org/issues/resources/transgender-people-and-bathroom-access](http://www.transequality.org/issues/resources/transgender-people-and-bathroom-access)





Secondary Research

# The History

- 1952**  
Christine Jorgensen: First American to Have a Sex Change
- 1966**  
Riots at Compton's Cafeteria, San Francisco
- 1969**  
The Stonewall Riots, New York
- 2017**  
25 Transgender individuals Fatally Shot



Secondary Research

# Transgender Community

**41%**

have **attempted Suicide.**

**46%**

feel **uncomfortable** seeking help from the police.

**75%**

transgender youth **feel unsafe at school.**

**90%**

have experienced **discrimination at work.**



Secondary Research

# 2017 the deadliest year for colored Transgender women

According to the Human Rights Campaign, 2017 has seen 25 transgender people fatally shot or killed by other violent means.

## Research Objective

# What do we want to understand?

The purpose of our research is to understand how the transgender community define their safety and security and how do they seek it.





## Research Process

# Primary Research Method: Interviews

While choosing the Transgender community as our topic we thought it would be easy for us to meet with a lot of individuals as San Francisco has a lot of organizations working for the community. But soon realized how challenging it was to find individuals who would want to speak to us and how reserved the community was to discuss the topic of Safety & Security.

**Framing the right questions was a key thing as it was a sensitive community we were trying to understand.**



# Discussion Guide

## Introducing Ourselves

We have been asked to complete an assignment to learn and understand about safety issues concerning the community. This interview is for an academic purpose and the information will be kept confidential throughout.

If it is okay with you, I would like to audio record today's session and take photos of things that might be relevant to the project. It's because I will not be able to remember everything that we saw or discussed. Anything you tell us will remain confidential and anonymous. Your identity will not be shared with anyone beyond our student research team. Do we have your permission?

## Interview Structure:

The interview will last about 40 minutes, spending most of the time with me asking questions and with \_\_\_\_ taking notes.

## PART 1 – Introduction

Tell us about yourself! Where are you living? What do you do?

Tell us how your regular day looks like!

## PART 2 – Issues regarding Safety & Security

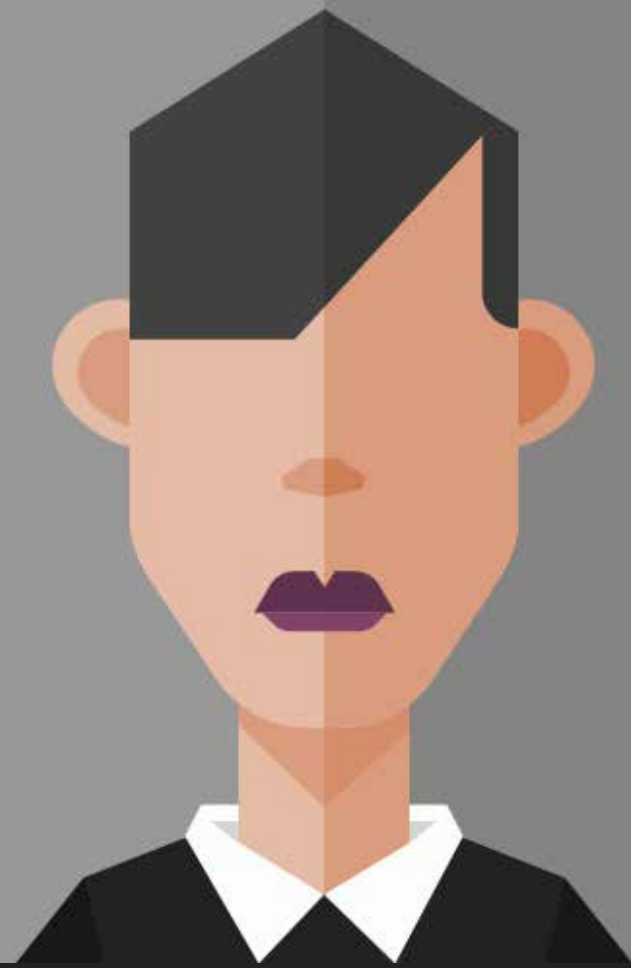
What are your thoughts about safety? Where do you feel the most safe?

Could you narrate us an incident where safety concerns were involved?

## PART 3 – Stories about identity and belongingness

Where do you see yourself in the next 5/10 years? (Goals and Aspirations)

Could you tell us when did you know about your gender identity? What were your initial thoughts in your transition period?



ZOA | 42

TRANS/INTERSEX/IN HER TRANSITION PERIOD

CARD SORTING | GENERATIVE METHOD

### Keywords

Verbal Assault, Physical Assault, Bully

### Goals/Aspirations

Wishes to go back to school to study graphic design. Travel enthusiast. In five years, she wishes to travel to Japan, learn Japanese and visit Cambodia too.

**“I love Chrysanthemums and hate guns. Vermont had all the retired army guys and guns were their toys. I couldn’t bear it anymore…”**

Zoa is experiencing homelessness. She has been visiting MNRC for the past 11 months for case management services — for finding shelters and medical support. She was born in Vermont. She came to San Francisco eleven months ago. Work has got her here in the city but it isn’t the only reason. Her story is an unnerving experience.

**“Whenever they put me, at least they (MNRC) give a damn, I have to get up early but it’s life.”**

She currently has a job but can’t afford an apartment yet. She wakes up at 5AM and goes to MNRC around 5:30AM every day to schedule medical appointments and figure out her shelters. She feels MNRC is her safe place because she trusts the organization and their services. She is comfortable with whatever shelter MNRC can provide her with.

**“Vermont was violent — it was getting dark for me. It wasn’t an easy situation for me there. My neighbors hired few Mexicans to drill holes through my door. They had cars patrolling for me. It got weird, and weird and weird. They forced me to get out of there.”**

When asked about her parents, she said — “My mom has passed away, she realized I wasn’t making it “till the end” and my dad was alive until recently when I tried to contact him to let him know that “I made it”, I was informed that he’s no more. It was a big blow.” Zoa thinks safety means no fighting, no argument, and not getting attacked. Her hometown - Vermont was getting “darker” for her.

**“Safety was not just the issue but the only issue.”**

Her hometown had a lot of shooting ranges and gun violence. Most guys were retired army people who all had weapons. That’s where she had to get out of. She wanted to move on and live a life. Before coming to San Francisco, she has been to a lot of other places. She moved a lot to get away from people who were following/watching her.

“I had to move several times only to keep them off the rack. That was the deal. People followed me. My neighborhood didn’t like me at all. I had to keep moving. I was told to come to San Francisco, someone from work told me it’s safe here.”

**“I knew I liked pink and not blue — that’s how young I was.”**

When interviewing, she wasn’t comfortable with the word — ‘Transgender’. She preferred ‘Intersex’ as she is undergoing medical surgeries. She was very young when she realized her situation. She knew that she isn’t the one what they thought her to be. The transition journey till now has been mostly smooth for her. It’s important for her to be “accepted” now. And she is being patient with the whole process — coordinating with her doctors and doing everything she possibly can in her power.

**“Coming from nothing to gaining something was my only motive. I had to travel, do everything to feel safe and accepted. It’s like well the world is where it is but all you have to do is make it a better place for yourself.”**



## TED | 45

TRANS/GAY/CROSSDRESSER/GENDER BENDER

### CARD SORTING | GENERATIVE METHOD

#### Keywords

Hopeful, Independent, Caring

#### Goals/Aspirations

Keep volunteering for the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and make the world a better place.  
Work in technology during the week and continue fundraising during weekends.  
Run a marathon!

Transgender Community

# “The safety concerns within the LGBTQ community is tremendous. Especially this year.”

Ted works in San Francisco and lives around Mission Dolores Park. Works as a technical writer in a tech firm based in Embarcadero.

**“My name is Ted. But only on weekdays! On weekends, I’m known by the name - Sister Que Sera Sera.”**

For Ted, weekdays are different from weekends. Usually on weekdays, Ted takes a JLine down to Embarcadero to get to his workplace. He sometimes need to work off site too. Since he is a technical writer, he needs to collect information and write reports in a manner that easily understandable. At the end of the day, he usually plays video games, meet friends or simply head back home.

**“I want the world be a better place — to show tolerance towards the LGBTQ community.”**

On weekends, Ted does volunteer work for Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, San Francisco (focus -LGBTQ activism, a charity, protest, and street performance organization that uses drag and religious imagery to call attention to sexual intolerance and satirizes issues of gender and morality). Within the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, his name is Sister Que Sera Sera. He is an active and dedicated member of the organization. Sometimes he is even volunteering after work on weekdays for fundraising events/charity shows.

**“It’s my life mission — to raise money for other groups that need help, for LGBTQ causes, art groups — anything that needs attention.”**

**“Usually on weekends, I’m in a dress, with a lot of makeup and jewelry. I love being expressive with my inner self.”**

He mentioned that the nun motif remains the same when he dresses, but it has been joined with exaggerated make-up that accentuates the rebellion against gender roles and religion. According to him, every sister within the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence has a name — a name that has a great pun — His name ‘Que Sera Sera’ means Whatever will be, will be — which means he can be whatever he chooses to be.

**“I’m pretty lucky, I have a car and a home. I’m a lot safer than a lot of other people and I’m pretty big and imposing. People get attacked and hurt very badly. It’s been happening more this year. I don’t want to talk about it right now.”**

Ted always makes sure that during weekends when he is volunteering with the Sisters, they all go back home safely. Safety is of prime importance. He feels that unless the world realizes that creative expression is just like the freedom of speech, this world won’t be safe for anyone.

**“The safety concerns within the LGBTQ community is TREMENDOUS. Especially this year.”**

He strongly feels about safety concerns within the LGBTQ community. Especially the Trans and Queer community which he feels is under violent attack. He feels that SF has reasonably tolerant humans. One may walk down the streets and be safe but not always. As far as safety is concerned, incidents against transgender and queer community is on high rise for political reasons.



**TAVI | 22**  
TRANS QUEER

## CARD SORTING | GENERATIVE METHOD

### Keywords

Confident, Compassion, Discrimination

### Goals/Aspirations

Wishes to Doctorate in Film studies and become a Film-maker, become a Storyteller in the future. She would like to be a Planetarium Host. She wants to study at the Academy of Science about cosmos and universe. A part of her wants to get a degree in theoretical physics too

Transgender Community

**“I don’t have breakfast. I stay up late and prepare to fight (plan) for the next day.”**

Tavi was born in Oakland. She is a sex worker who is experiencing homelessness. Is curious about the world beyond this city and has a boyfriend whose folks are from Gujarat.

**“My regular days are mostly about finding a shelter. As if I’m on BART hunting for safe spots. I often stay at my friend’s place but I get kicked out.”**

She describes her usual days are more about finding a safe spot for herself so that she can continue doing what she wants to do with her life. She is eager to find a permanent shelter but for now he prefers her Tenderloin shelters more than anything else.

**“I don’t have breakfast. I stay up late and prepare to fight (plan) for the next day.”**

Her mornings are a big part of her life as she tends to find food and shelter during the day so that she isn’t in the streets during the night.

**“Tenderloin is my safest spot even though it smells like shit.”**

Issues concerning safety is pivotal to her life. She was often attacked but never around Tenderloin. As a sex worker, she feels Tenderloin is her safest spot in the entire city. She often visits St. James Infirmary (a peer based occupational health and safety clinic for sex workers and their families) for his regular medical check ups.

**“I fight for the people I feel for.”**

Apart from her profession, she interns as an Advocate for Sex Workers at the Young Women’s Freedom Center (formerly called the Center For Young Women’s Development) and volunteers at the Transgender Intersex Justice Project, SF. She is also taking printmaking workshops and writes blogs whenever she has free time.

**“I don’t like to answer that question. I question that question. If you are interviewing someone who is Cisgender, would you ask them when did you know that you’re Cis? It’s a challenging question.”**

Tavi didn’t appreciate when we asked her the question — ‘When did you know you’re Trans?’ She questioned our question by asking if we would ask the same question to a Cisgender. I realized our approach was wrong and we could have hurt her feelings. So we apologized and seeked her advice on how to approach Transgender with these sensitive question.

**“Everyday when you are there in the world, someone tries it with you because you are Trans. That People think you are the property. Misogyny and forces of you being trans — it’s just a lot. And then if you are black or brown, it’s another thing. I’m just saying that if I wasn’t white appearing, it could get worse for me, I’d be less safe walking in the street. Cause of anti-black colonization and white supremacy, it’s getting darker for the colored Trans.”**



## SHEVECA | 38

GENDER VARIES ON HOW HE/SHE FEELS

### CARD SORTING | GENERATIVE METHOD

#### Keywords

Loan, Airport Security.

#### Goals/Aspirations

STAY ALIVE, KEEP GOING (staying alive in San Francisco is a hard task — It's a city that licenses even the bicycles and has lot more crimes than any other city in the world)

Transgender Community

**“This city is dirty, very constrained and very expensive. The streets are dark in the nights.”**

Sheveca is an Engineer from England. She came to San Francisco ten years ago for work.

**“I sleep for a couple of hours - maybe 4 hours. That's an engineer's life in San Francisco.”**

Usually wakes up at 7AM, works till 2-3AM. She sleeps only for couple of hours in a day. That's how she described her life as an engineer in San Francisco. She mentioned that during her free time, she visits Wicked Grounds and likes to work over a cup of coffee as she doesn't like to work at home. She loves opera and have been going to every opera for the last 3 years in San Francisco.

**“I have traveled a lot. Maybe someday I would settle in the Netherlands or Sweden — anywhere where the political climate is stable.”**

Sheveca has traveled to several places — Eastern Europe, Western Europe, West America, East America, Middle East because of work. Have plans of shifting from San Francisco but not sure where. She wants to live in the Netherlands — but a lot depends on the political climate is stable.

**“San Francisco is less populated with spaces dedicated to various communities but the crime rate is higher than any other city.”**

Sheveca feels London is densely populated. But San Francisco isn't. But as a city it has dedicated spaces to various communities but those communities aren't safe either.

**“This city is dirty, very constrained and very expensive. The streets are dark in the nights.”**

Sheveca cannot bicycle on the bay bridge, it takes a huge amount of time to go from one place to another via public transport. She doesn't understand why house prices are high, parking is expensive; basically everything is expensive. And even though the city is expensive, it's not providing the most basic of all human needs to its residents - Safety.

**“I'm be 6ft tall and athletic. So I personally feel safe even though there are things going on around me. The bulk of the crime seen here is not crime against people, its crime against identity and property. My height and built are a privilege when it comes to safety.”**

Sheveca states that 'safety' means something which is happening today, it's the present and 'security' is all about the future — “will the situation remain the same tomorrow?” Security is something which the place provides. There is always a trade off between security and opportunity. Is that really true is the question.



## CRISTOPHER | 28

TRANSGENDER MAN

### CARD SORTING | GENERATIVE METHOD

#### Keywords

No Activity

#### Goals/Aspirations

He wishes to continue teaching and also help other professional teachers in the district to become better teachers/professional guides to students. It's a part of professional development within the district's teacher's community.

Transgender Community

**“In every decade, people have found groups to blame in the society.”**

Cristopher is a 9th grade high school teacher. He lives in Fremont and teaches at Palo Alto High School. He has been teaching Maths and History for the last four years.

**“I love teaching. It gives me a purpose — a responsibility towards the young people around the world. To nurture them, to educate them, to make young people realize and create a safe space for them to talk about their role in the society.”**

Usually wakes up at 5:30AM and reaches school by 7:30AM. He works till 4PM and after that he is often back home reading and following up on the class/home assignments. On alternate weekends, he's in charge of taking students on educational field trips to various places around California. He is passionate about his profession. He feels morally responsible for his actions as an educator. He wants to create deep impact in his students' mind on how to address issues to question authority when something is wrong — to not tolerate injustice and live a life worth living.

**“My presence in school creates a safe environment for the transgender children to feel inclusive in all school activities and program. I'm on a constant outlook for their needs and help them battle with their everyday problems.”**

Cris is attentive towards all of his students, especially towards the transgender students. His presence makes the school a safe space. He teaches his students to be tolerant regardless age, race and sex — to show compassion for each other.

**“Sex education is focused on straight relationships.”**

Cris voices that Sex education is filtered and requires special attention. Education is empowering and if it is filtered information, we tend to understand only that part of the information, not all. He questions the format of the current curriculum because it is not all-gender inclusive. He feels that it begins from here itself — the respect, the inclusiveness and compassion. It starts from here and then it accelerates towards a rich, deeper understanding of tolerance towards all genders in the society.

**“Transgender women of color are being negatively targeted nation wide and that creates a hostile environment, an unaccepting attitude towards the community. And honestly, that worries me the most.”**

Cris is very worried about the recent violent attacks and growing resentment towards the transgender community. He feels that the current political atmosphere of the country is high-risk for the transgender community. He voices his concerns regarding the fatal violence towards the transgender women of color — the intersections of racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia that conspires to deprive them of employment, housing, healthcare and other necessities, barriers that make them vulnerable infuriates me.

**“I felt different when I started interacting with my friends during my Sophomore year. I could relate to their feelings. But nowadays, younger people are realizing sooner than ever — in 5th grade, even younger than that — and that's largely because of social media and the rigorous use of internet as a conversational medium.”**



**CLARISSE | 29**

WRITER WOMAN

**CARD SORTING | GENERATIVE METHOD**

**Keywords** \_\_\_\_\_

No Activity

**Goals/Aspirations** \_\_\_\_\_

Want to do work which is meaningful and interesting and which supports the community in some or the other way.

**“I think San Francisco is the natural migration point for the community and there is a huge freedom and ability of expression”**

Clarisse is a writer and has been writing about BDSM and sexuality.

**“I usually like to work and do my meeting in a cafe like Wicked Grounds.”**

Usually I work from home or take up meetings at places like these (Wicked Grounds). I have written several books on sexuality and BDSM. I love to write and read during my free time.

**“I think San Francisco is the natural migration point for the community and there is a huge freedom and ability of expression”**

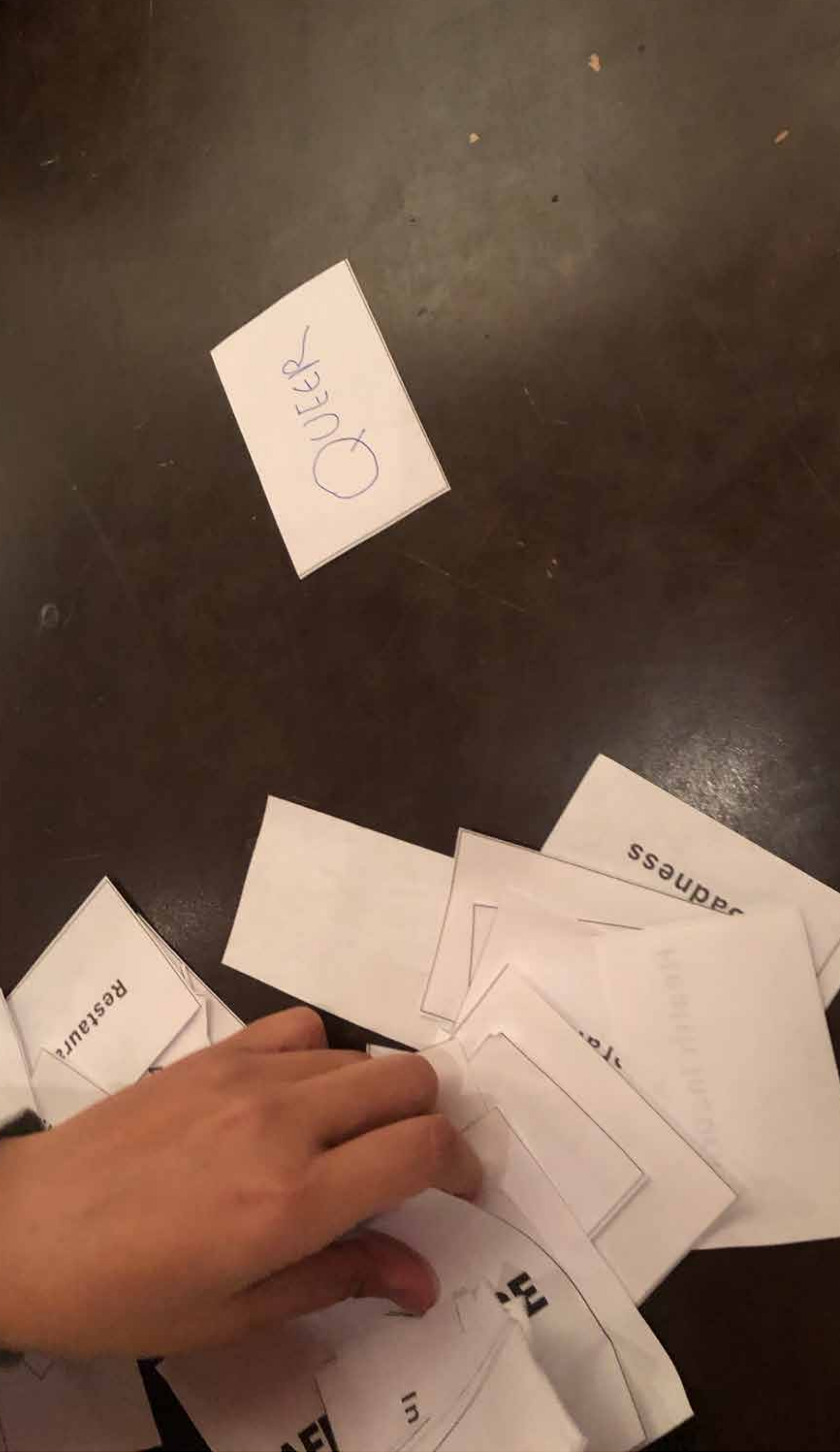
Clarisse did move to San Francisco in 2013 and worked as a professional writer. She thinks that for her as a writer, the natural place to live is New York but she cannot give up on San Francisco because of the community presence.

**“I love San Francisco and I am lucky to live here.”**

Clarisse feels that living in San Francisco enables her to do whatever with her life and explore herself as a writer as well as a person to the fullest. She loves to attend various events within the community.

**“In general the city is safe to voice the thoughts but you need to be cautious.”**

Clarisse thinks that she is privileged to be white and educated and she feels comparatively safe. But she definitely avoids people that she works for the community as they then start making judgments about her and her thoughts and contain their own thoughts.



## Research Process

# Generative Research Method: Card Sorting

Card sorting is a well-established research technique for discovering how people understand and categorize information. In this conceptual activity we tried to discover how people think about and make sense of the information that we present before them.

We used hybrid card sorting technique where participants were given 50 cards each and 2 categories SAFE and SECURE. The participants were asked to sort cards into categories that were given and can create their own categories as well.



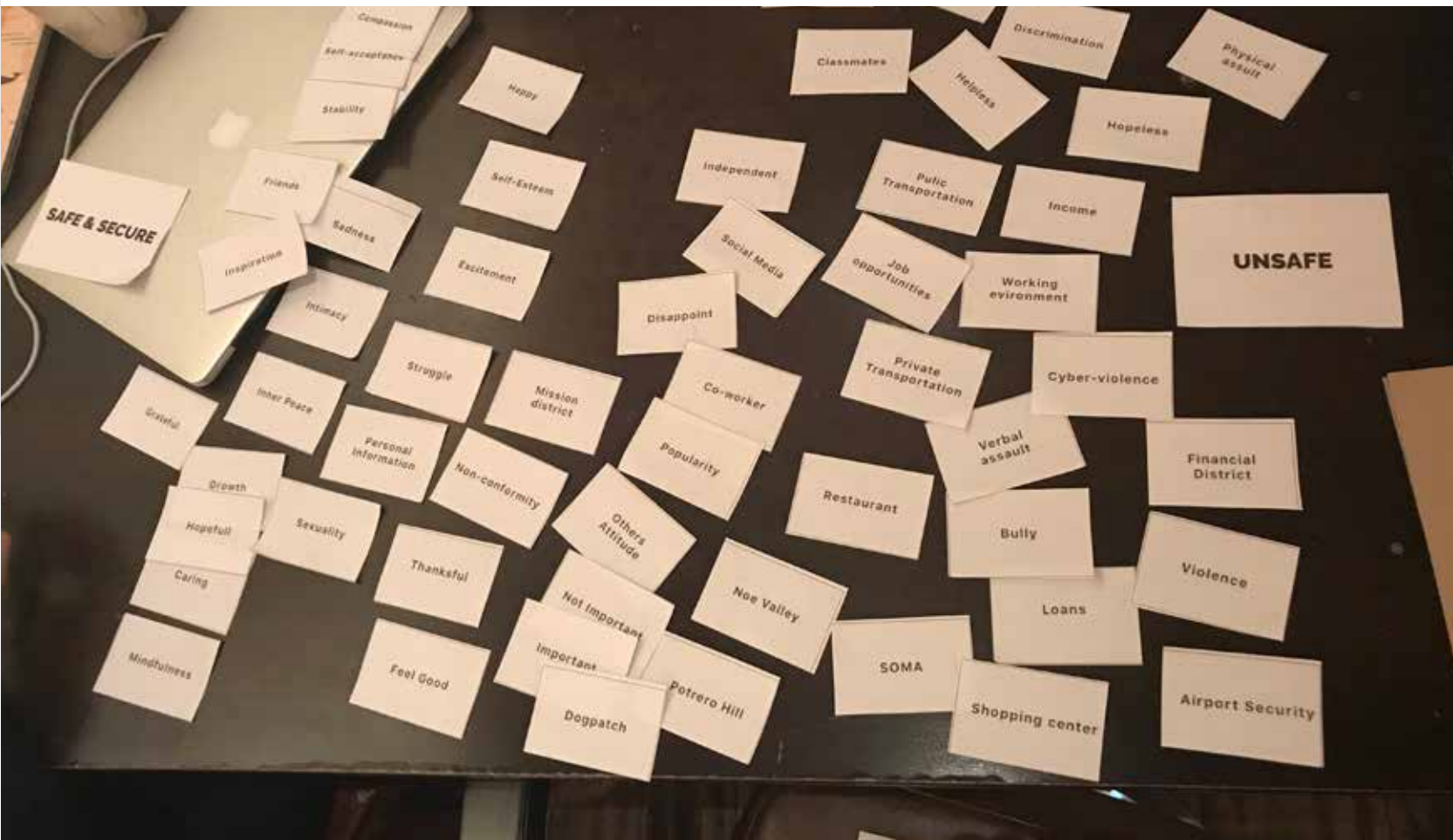
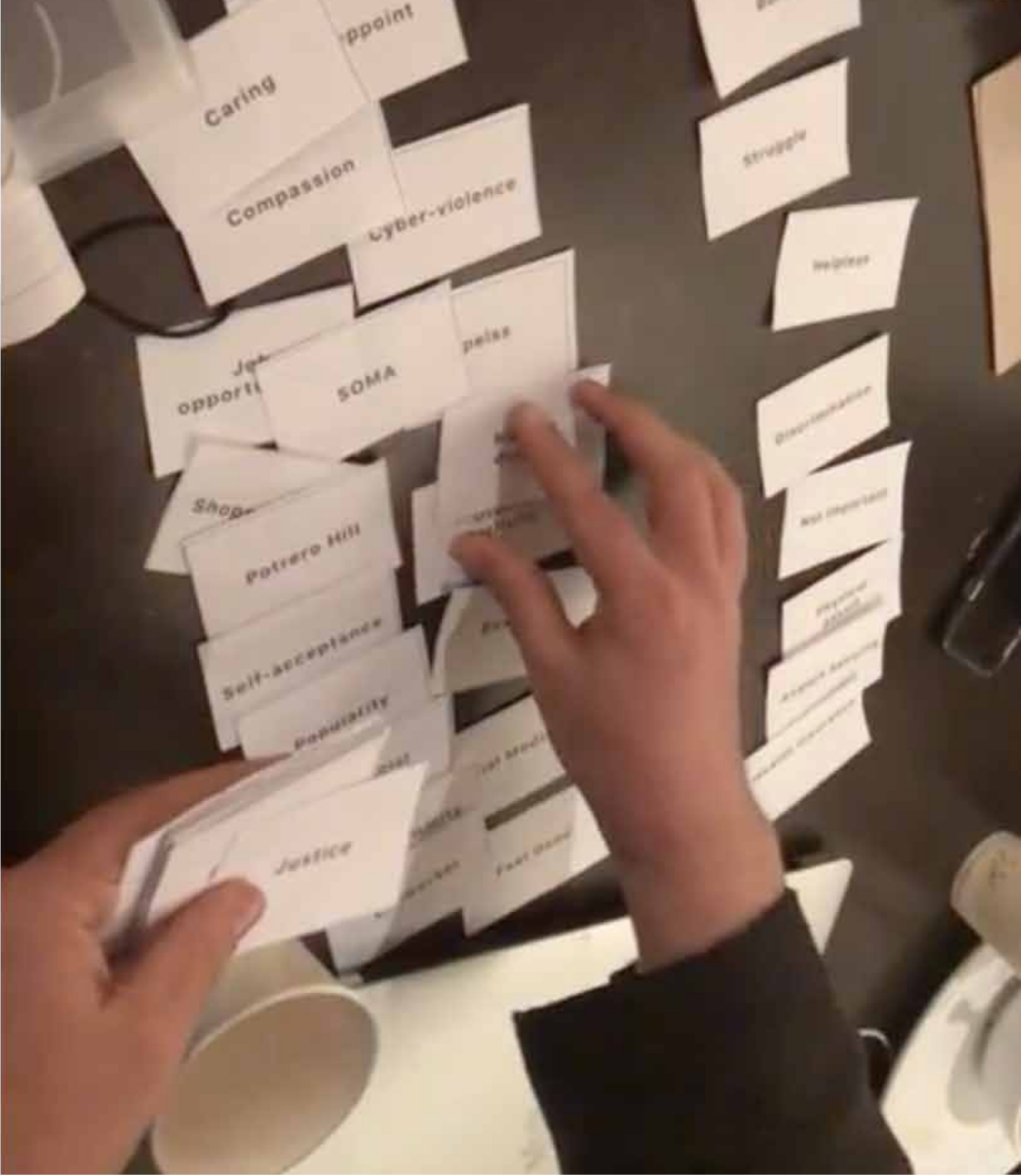
## Research Process | Generative Research Method

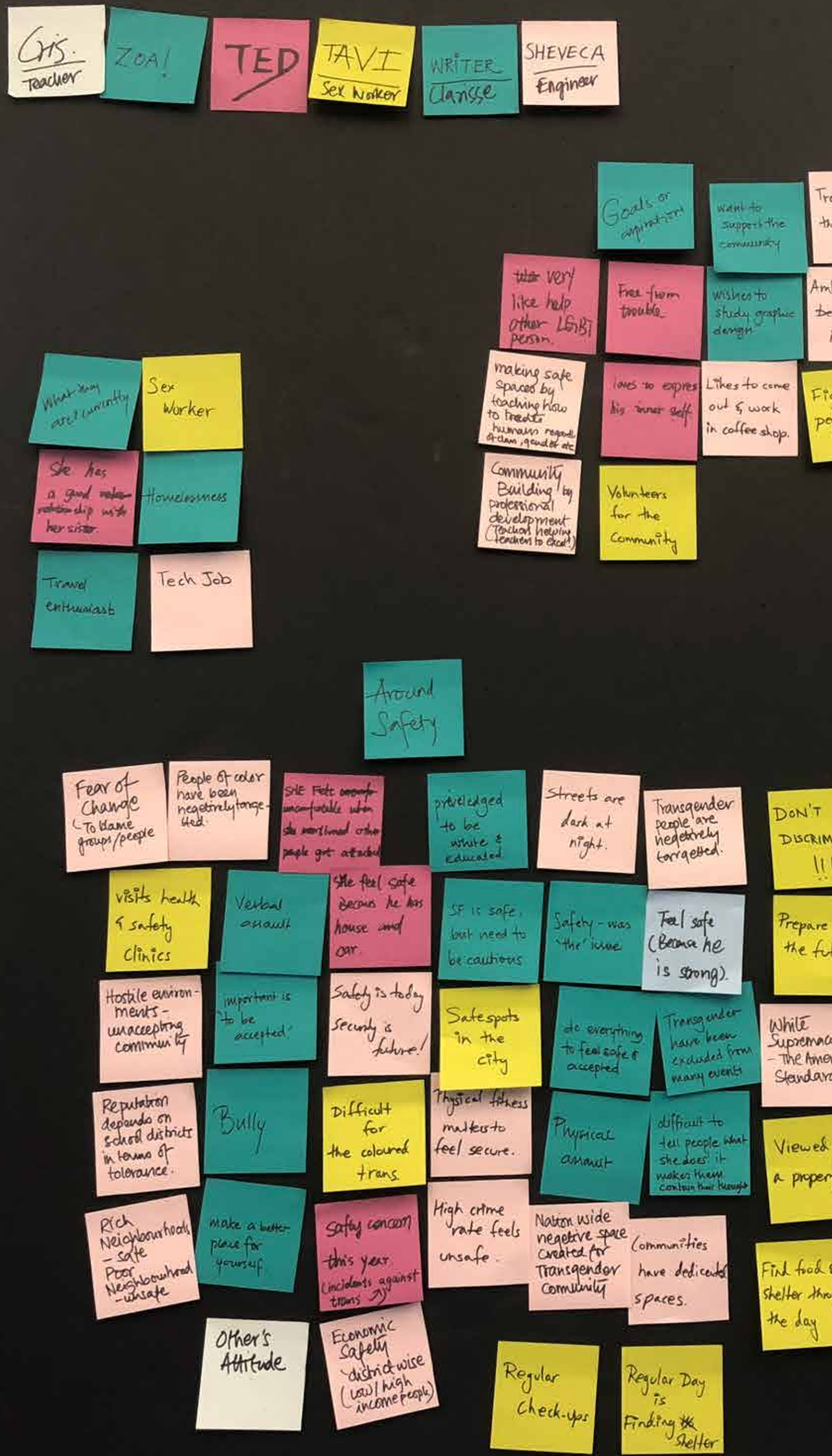
### The cards that we gave them included:

Public Transportation, Private Transportation, Restaurant, Working environment, Housing, Classmates, Education environment, Co-workers, Mission District, SOMA, Financial District, Dogpatch, Noe Valley, Friends, Social media, Cyber-violence, Discrimination, Shopping center, Others Attitude, Job opportunities, Justice, Airport Security, Risk, Sexuality, Personal Information, Violence, Physical assault, Bully, Health Insurance, Sadness, Struggle, Disappoint, Inspiration, Helpless, Grateful, Hopeless, Hopeful, Happy, Excitement, Mindfulness, Caring, Inner Peace, Intimacy, Compassion, Growth, Stability, Tolerance, Important, Not Important, Self-acceptance.

### Most Sorted Cards in Categories:

Safe and Security	Unsafe
Friends	Verbal Assault
Self-Esteem	Public Transportation
Self-acceptance	Discrimination
Justice	Loan
Intimacy	Health Insurance
Disappoint	Physical Assault





## Data Synthesis

# Topic Areas

Everyone has goals and aspirations in spite of their life struggles (Goals or Aspiration)

- Travel the world.
- Making safe space by teaching how to treat human regardless of class, gender, etc.
- Support the transgender community.
- Wish to study graphic design.
- Ambition to become a film maker.

Everyone has different experiences during the transition phase. (Transition)

- Transition is a sensitive issue.
- Felt different after speaking to other transgender individuals.
- People do not want to discuss this.
- Liked Pink and not Blue.
- Intersex.

# Topic Areas

## Other factors affecting the transgender community (Other Major Issues)

- Filtered Sex education.
- Inequality and complex social structure.
- Unstable political climate.
- Concern about financial issues.
- Race matters.
- Everything is expensive.

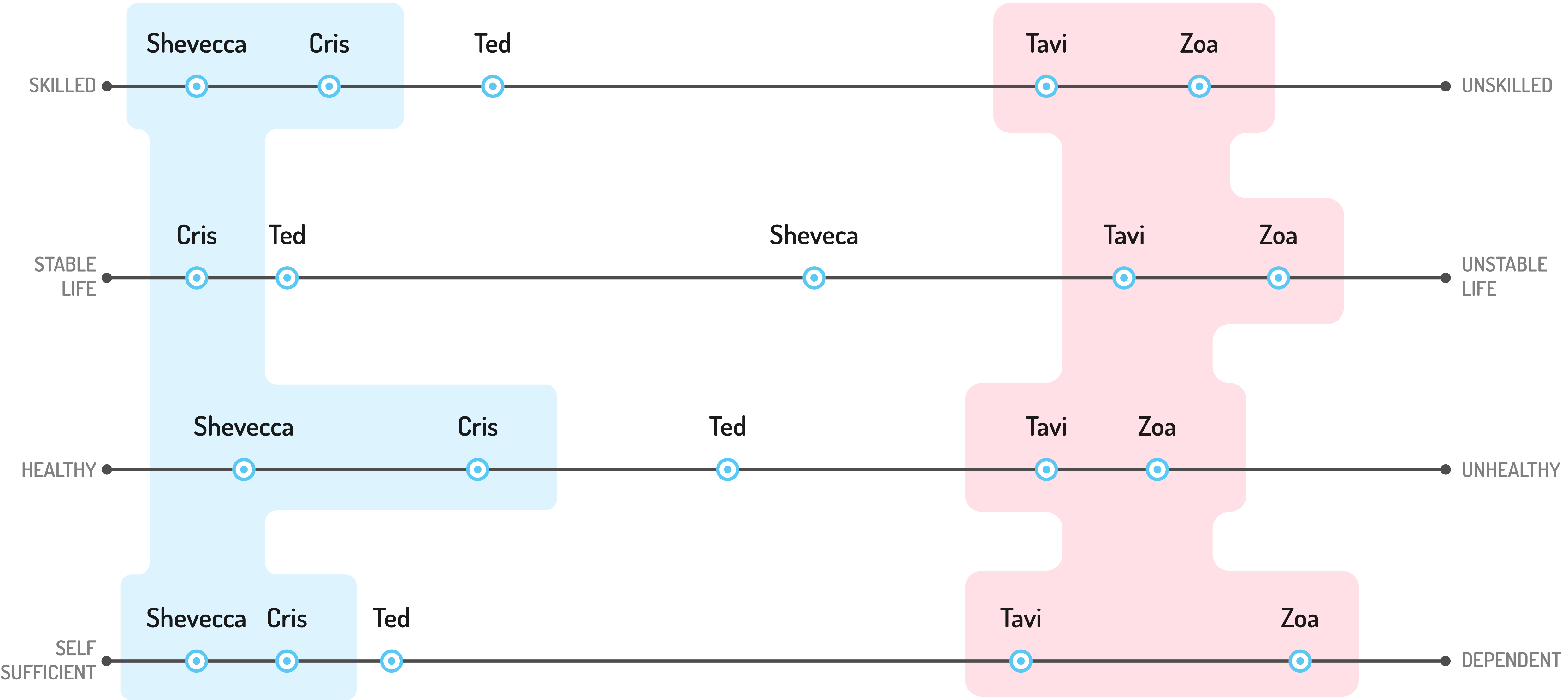
## A varied range of feelings and concerns. (Feels)

- Self confidence, Positive and Energetic.
- Think critically but question with the right conscience.
- Responsible for the issues.
- Being patient.
- Younger people are realizing identity at young age.

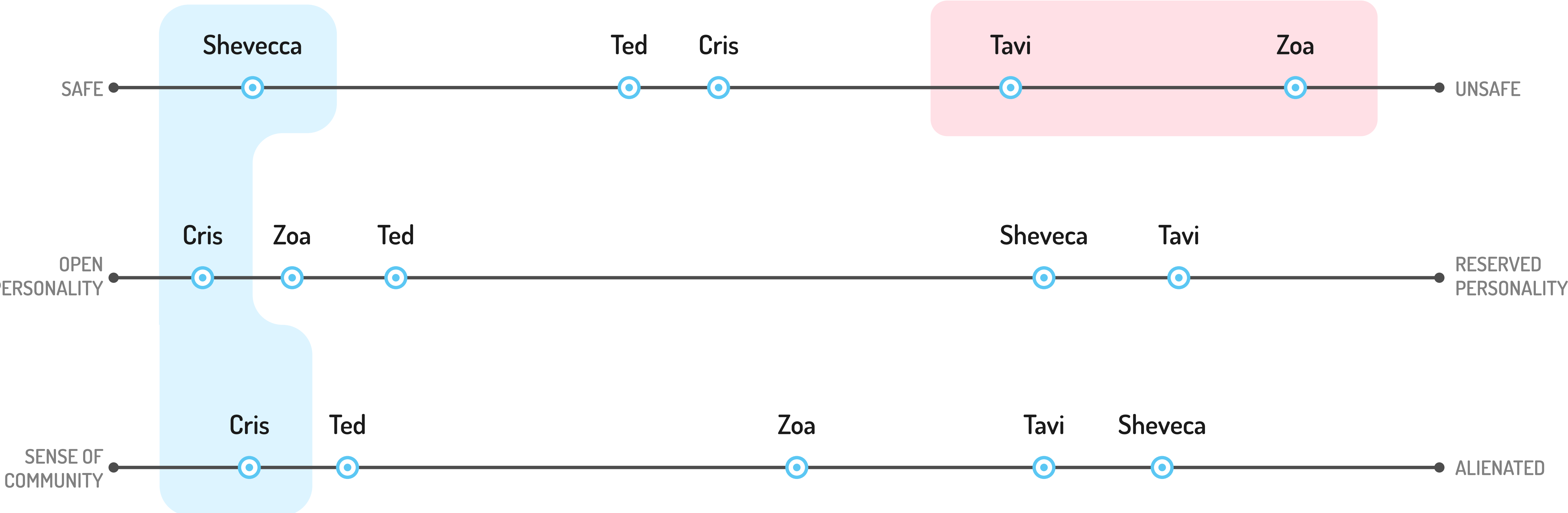
## Defining factors that define Safety & Security. (Around Safety)

- Verbal, Physical Assault and Bullying.
- Felt safe because owns a house and a car.
- Privileged to be white and educated.
- Streets get dark at night.
- High crime rate feels unsafe.
- Hostile environments, unaccepting community

# Variable Ranges & Patterns



# Variable Ranges & Patterns



Skilled and Healthy individuals tend to be more stable and self sufficient while feeling comparatively more caring about the community.

Unskilled and Unhealthy individuals are less stable and are dependent while feeling alienated from the rest of the community.

# The Observations

- The transgender community does not want to talk about issues regarding safety & security.
- Transition is a sensitive topic.
- Safety & Security varies within the community.



# The Observations

- The transgender community does not want to talk about issues regarding safety & security.
- Transition is a sensitive topic.
- Safety & Security varies within the community.

# The Insights

- With violence against transgender people at an all-time high and rising, there is a sense of fear within the community.
- Sex Education is filtered and not inclusive of other genders in the society.
- Multiple factors like financial stability, education, physical strength and race contribute to the feeling of being safe and secure.

## The Conclusion

Being safe is your present condition — it's the current status of your well-being. But security is all about the future. So will your situation today remain the same tomorrow?



Thank You!