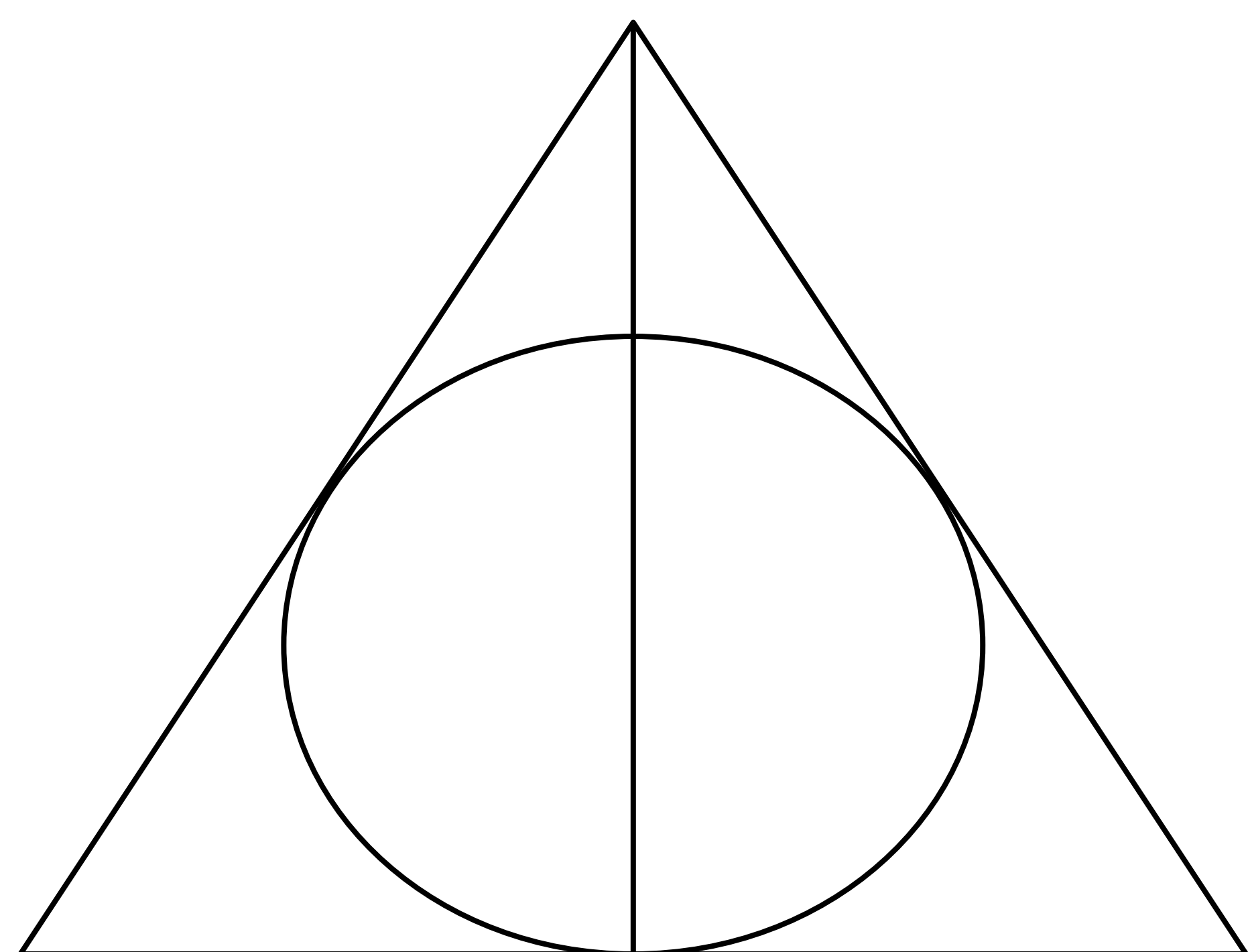




**Bournemouth
University**

Fandoms - They're real for us

Kirsty Stanley - School of Health and Social Care, Bournemouth University



Fandoms:

- “can grow up centered around any area of human interest or activity” e.g. individual celebrity/author/band, TV, film or book series or hobby, genre, fashion etc. (Wikipedia, 2014)
- “a subculture composed of fans characterized by a feeling of sympathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest.” (Wikipedia, 2014)
- “typically are interested in even minor details of the object(s) of their fandom and spend a significant portion of their time and energy involved with their interest, often as a part of a social network with particular practices.” (Wikipedia, 2014)
- “A cult that will destroy your life.” (Urban Dictionary, 2014)
- “A large group of unstable and emotional fans that devote half of their time in daily life, loving the thing they are so dedicated to.” (Urban Dictionary, 2014)
- ...and other such tongue in cheek definitions.

Follow the QR code
to a playlist of
Fandom videos



Including videos by:
Jenessa Baber, Jadene
Doak, Lauren
Fairweather, The Harry
Potter Alliance,
Vlogbrothers,, Me and
more...

Some fandom occupations

Conventions
Cosplay

Collecting:
Memorabilia
Merchandise

Fan-fiction
-songs
-art
-crafts

Fan Activism
e.g. Harry Potter
Alliance,
Nerdfighteria, This
Star Won't Go Out

Street Teams
V/Blogging

Connecting
(via Social
Media)
e.g. Facebook,
Forums, Twitter,
Tumblr

Share your Fandoms with the Sharpie

List your fandoms in this space and I will share a snapshot on my blog – if your fandom is already listed give it a tick ✓

The Meaning of Fandoms*

Identity
Belonging
Acceptance

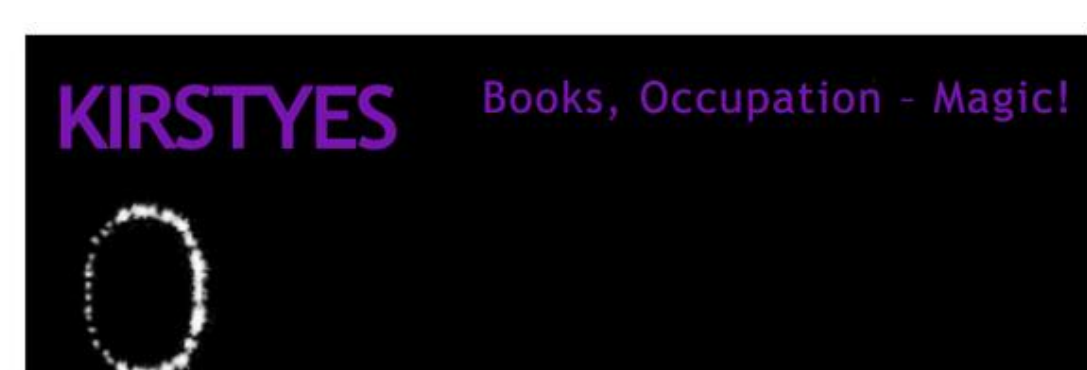
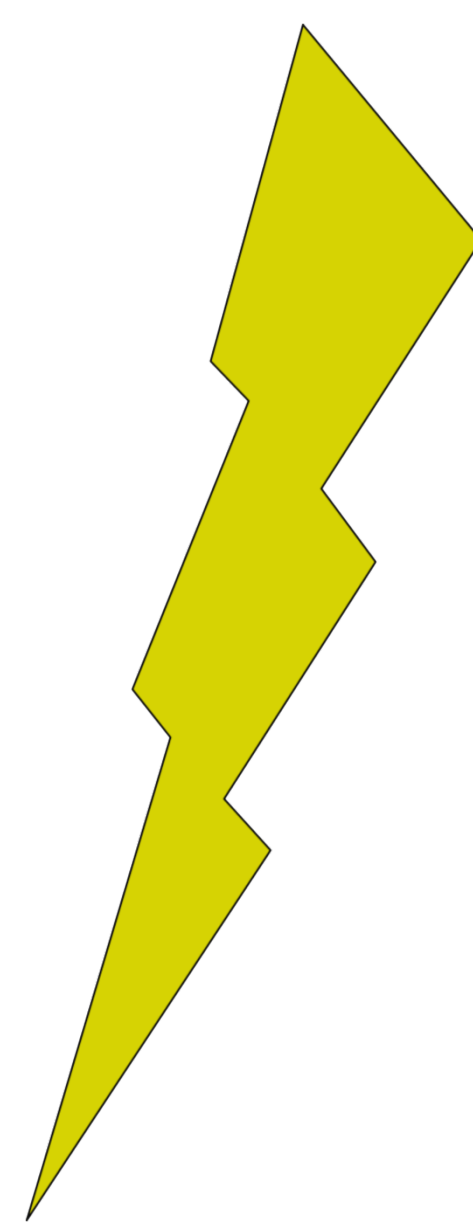
Free to
be me

Exploration of
own experience
in a safe way
Personal
expression

Decreasing
“World Suck”

Emotional
Regulation
Escape
“Feels”

Find out more about my fandom
occupations by following the QR code



Important considerations for OTs

- Take it seriously, don't judge and don't dismiss it as not important – facilitate and help eliminate barriers to meaningful engagement.
- Anyone can be a Geek!!
- Don't make assumptions about age or gender appropriateness.
- Interests have been noted to 'remain pretty stable', to 'sustain action' and as being essential for nurturing individuals to develop their potential (Yerxa 2013).
- Ask and Listen - to find out the meaning and range of fandoms/occupations.
- Can give insight into person's spirituality.
- Useful for motivation (see example below).
- There could be risks to involvement that need to be considered (e.g. meeting strangers, spending money, FOMO [fear of missing out] etc.)

“If it were me ... suffering from being very shy and not very confident at all ... if an occupational therapist were to use examples of characters from fandoms, so for example characters who are confident or characters who have loud personalities, I think it would encourage me to want to try and adopt their personality traits that make them confident because I know certainly for myself, in some way or another a lot of my favourite characters are inspiring to me.”
(Claire Doust, personal communication via facebook – permission given)

(Collaborative) Autoethnography – research your own occupations

Collaborative autoethnography according to Chang et al (2013, p. 11) is:

- ‘writing about individual experiences of life within the context of family, work, schooling, and society and interpreting the meanings of the experiences.’
- ‘studying the self collectively’
- There are different models/levels of collaboration.
- You can get to the heart of an experience.
- Follow the purple QR code for an example of autoethnographic writing about my fandom occupations.

References

1 Chang H, Ngunjiri, FW and Hernandez K-AC (2013) *Collaborative Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press. 2 Urban Dictionary, 2014. Fandom Definitions. Available from: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=fandom&page=2> Accessed 30.5.14 3 Wikipedia, 2014. Fandom. Available from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fandom> Accessed 30.5.14 4 Yerxa EJ (2013) Nurturing the Human Spirit for Occupation: Promoting Individual Flourishing. *Occupation: Awakening to the Everyday*, 5th-7th September 2013. University College Cork, Cork, Ireland. *With thanks to members of fandom groups I belong to for sharing your ideas which I have aimed to incorporate here.