



narrative games & sexual health education



a bit of a post-mortem
of my game about vaginas



narrascope lightning talks | 2023



WHO AM I???

- KB
- Writer
- Former (?) Educator
 - 7th to 12th grade
- Zine enjoyer
- Lover of weird, strange, thought-provoking interactive media
- Pelvic pain haver



what is pelvic pain?

endometriosis

irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

vestibulodynia

interstitial cystitis

pelvic floor dysfunction

vulvodynia

polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)

what is pelvic pain?

- ❖ Pain with sex,
- ❖ UTI-like symptoms (pain with urination, incontinence)
- ❖ Pain with bowel movements,
- ❖ Vulvar burning, rawness, itching, and pain with sitting / wearing tight pants

One in four (25%)

people with vaginas experiences chronic (*ie. pain lasting longer than 6 months*) vulvovaginal or pelvic pain.

... · Oct 4, 2021
what if I made my thesis game about my broken vag



... · Oct 4, 2021
it's sex education beloved



@square2mom 

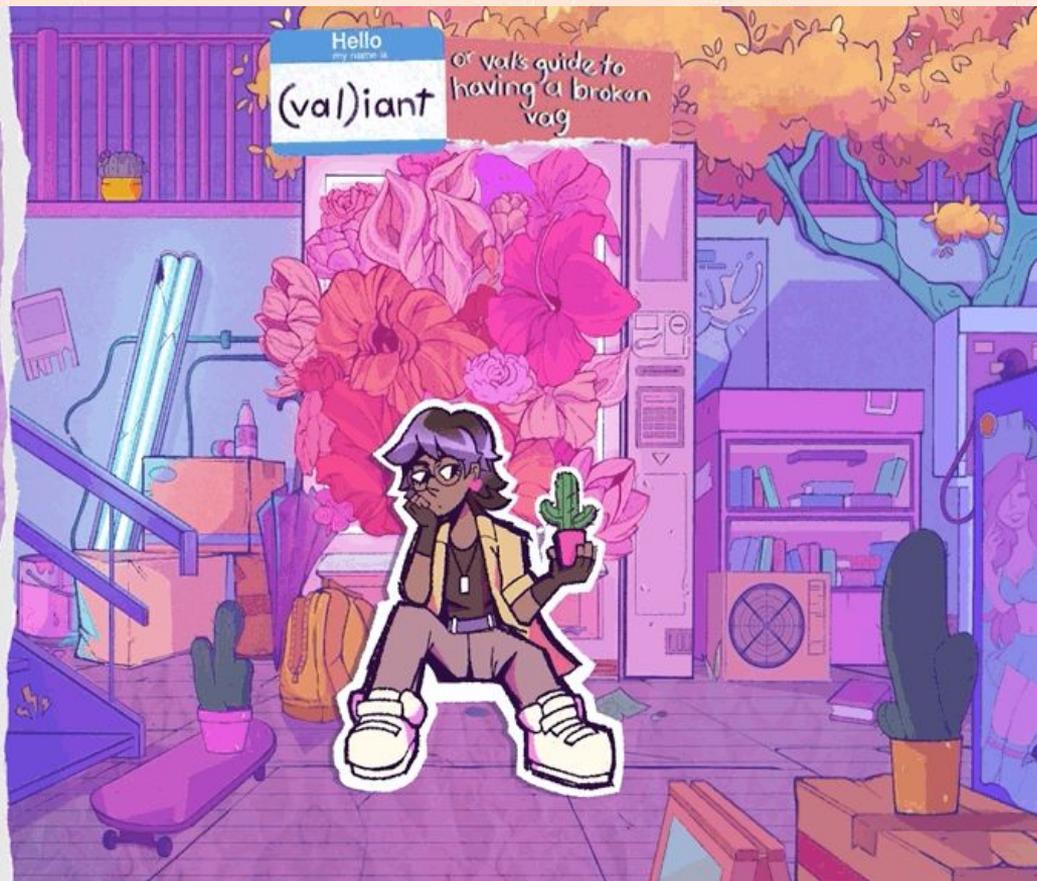
START GAME

Chapter Select

...More

Hello
my name is
(val)iant

or val's guide to
having a broken
vag







Sorry. Um, yeah, so I can't have sex.

E-exclude



**Attempt Mini-game /
Use Mechanic**

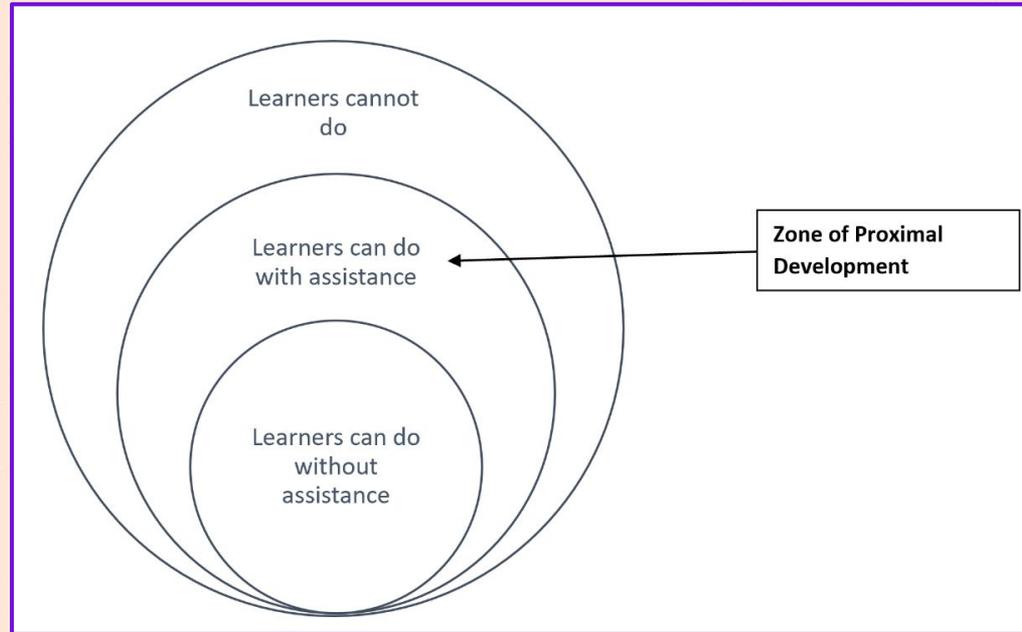
**Receive Exposition /
Narration**

story
progresses

success?
failure?



how do people LEARN?





autotelicity

Games teach players skills,
but only skills that apply
to the game's system itself
(in other words, "the magic circle").





Right? They're kind of a world to escape to. That shouldn't have any consequence on



what even IS
a narrative game
?!



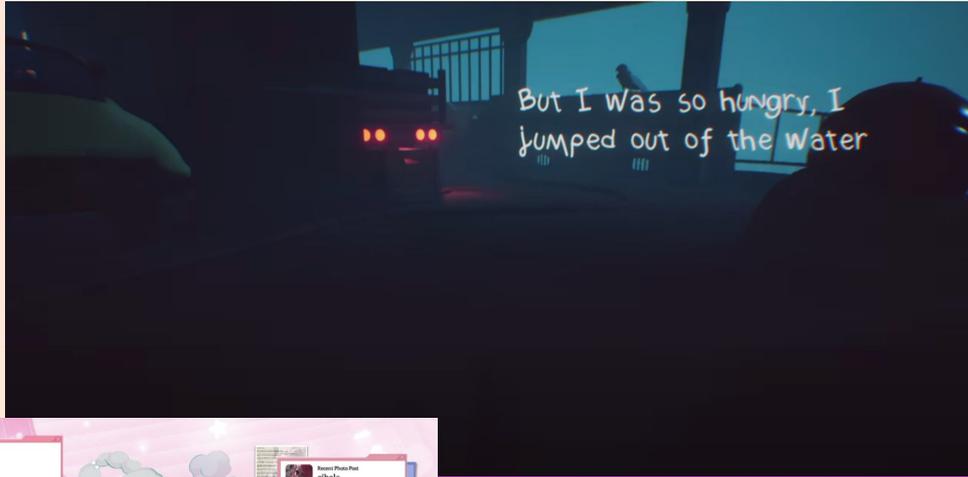
developer:

vulnerability, honesty,
authenticity

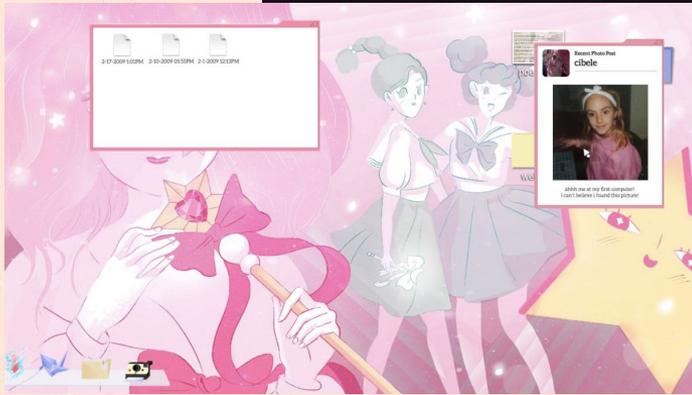
player:

agency, critical thinking





But I was so hungry, I
jumped out of the water



I FEEL WEIRD
ABOUT MY BODY

This isn't some *game*, you know.

Building a healthy relationship with your emotions isn't as simple as clicking buttons on a screen.



Questions Over Answers: Reflective Game Design

Rilla Khaled

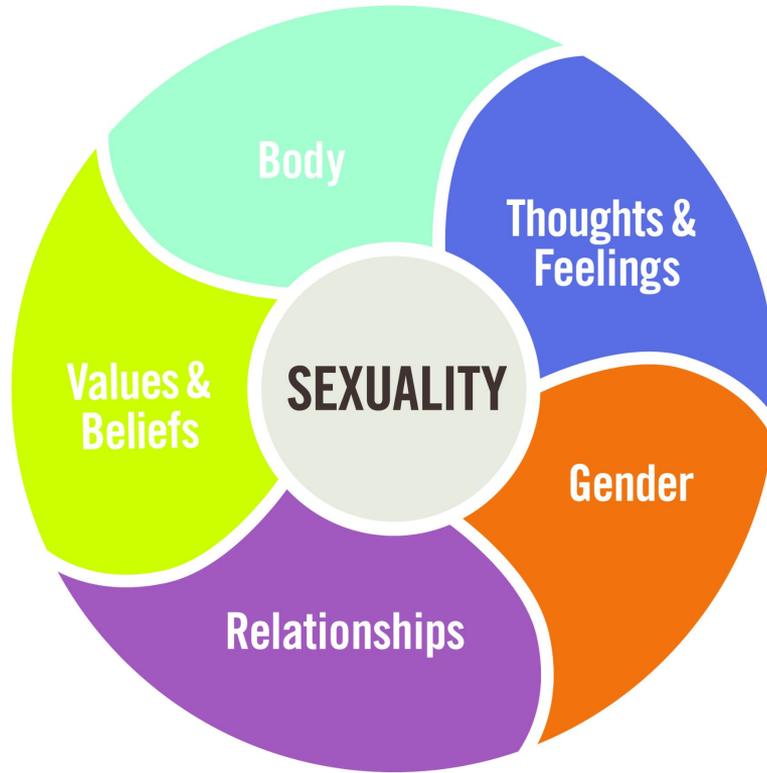
Abstract Reflection is the mental process that occurs when we encounter situations that cannot be effectively dealt with using previous experiences and solutions. For decades, it has been acknowledged as an important process in learning, and in recent years it has become a central focus of branches of interaction design. Games are highly appropriate vehicles for triggering and supporting reflection, but several of the dominant tropes of conventional game design directly work against reflection. In serious games, the promise of *safe environments*, the drive to pose problems with *clear solutions* and a preference for *stealth learning* complicate how directly we can design for reflection. In mainstream entertainment games, qualities such as *immersion* and the design traditions of *designing for the everyplayer* and *quantifying motivation* again run counter to a reflective agenda. Drawing on the critical and reflective design literature and on case studies of experimental games on the peripheries of mainstream game design, I propose *reflective game design*, a new alternative design agenda from which to design, deconstruct and make sense of play experiences.



I... don't see how that's important?

I wouldn't expect you to know that, of course.





in summary...

- ★ Dig deep and tell vulnerable stories
- ★ Narrative games encourage critical reflection
- ★ Learning about The Big Stuff can (and should) be uncomfortable
- ★ Oh yeah and more games about vaginas / games for sexual health please :)

All my links are here:



thank you



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