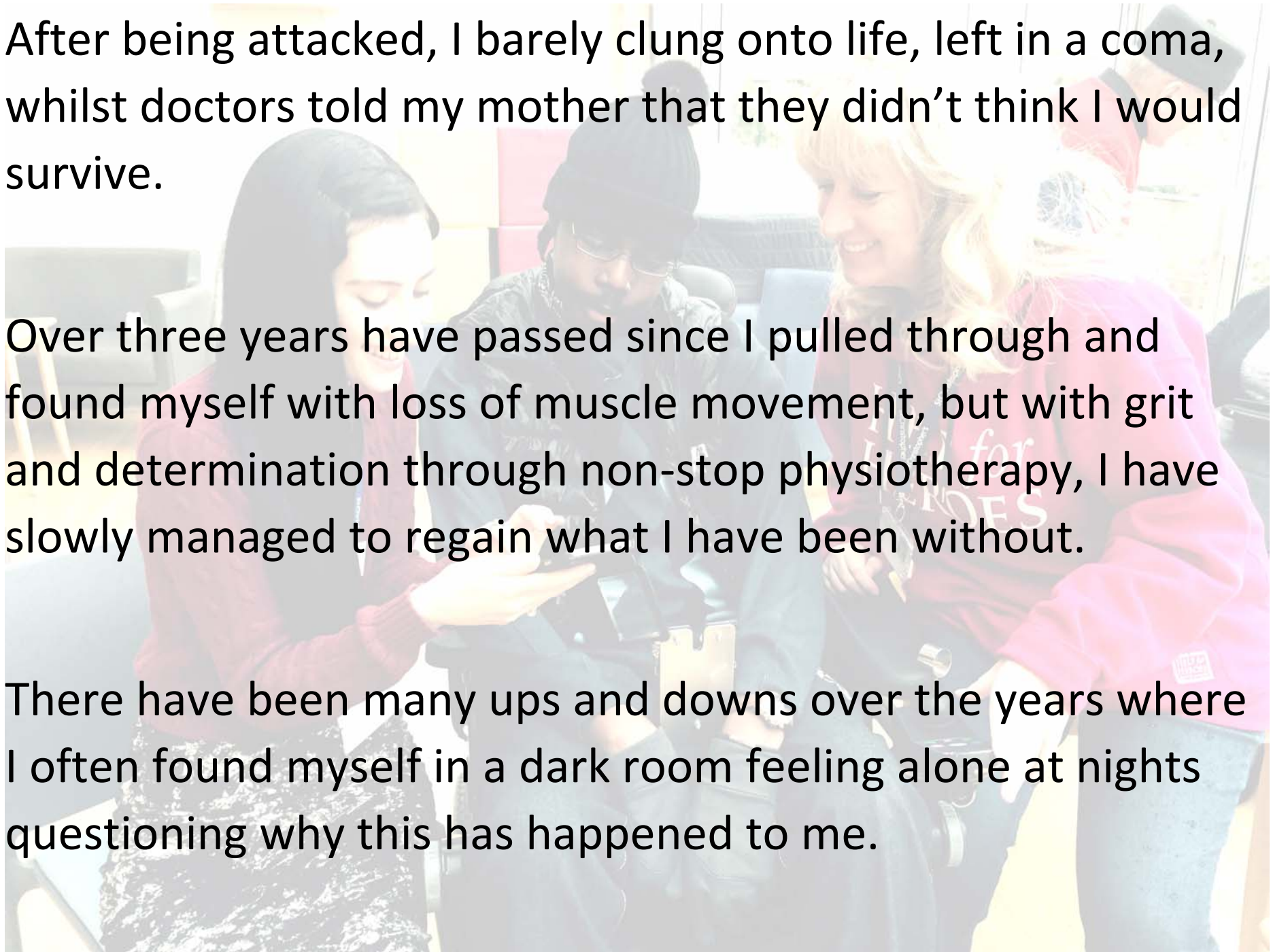


After being attacked, I barely clung onto life, left in a coma, whilst doctors told my mother that they didn't think I would survive.

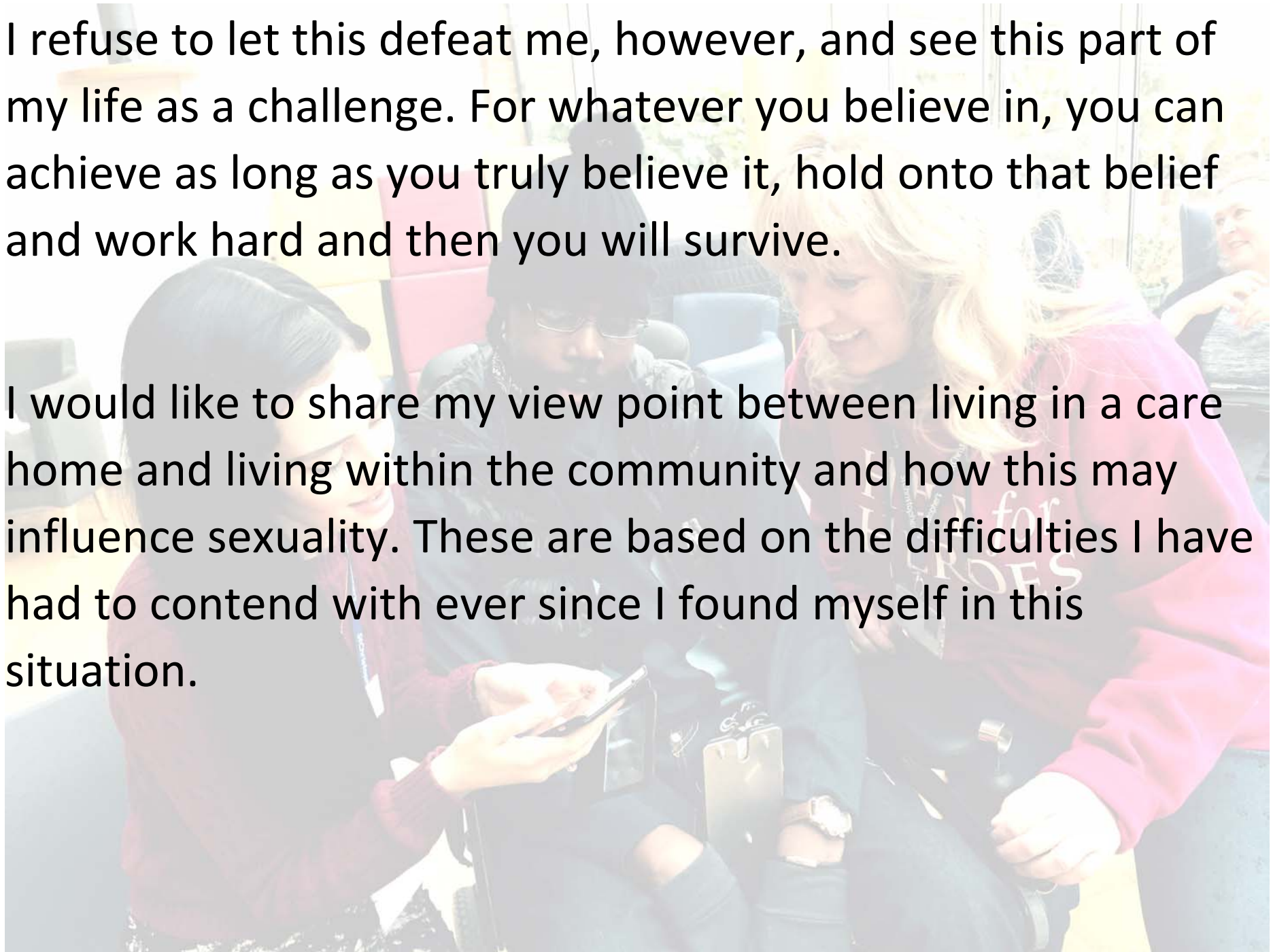
Over three years have passed since I pulled through and found myself with loss of muscle movement, but with grit and determination through non-stop physiotherapy, I have slowly managed to regain what I have been without.

There have been many ups and downs over the years where I often found myself in a dark room feeling alone at nights questioning why this has happened to me.



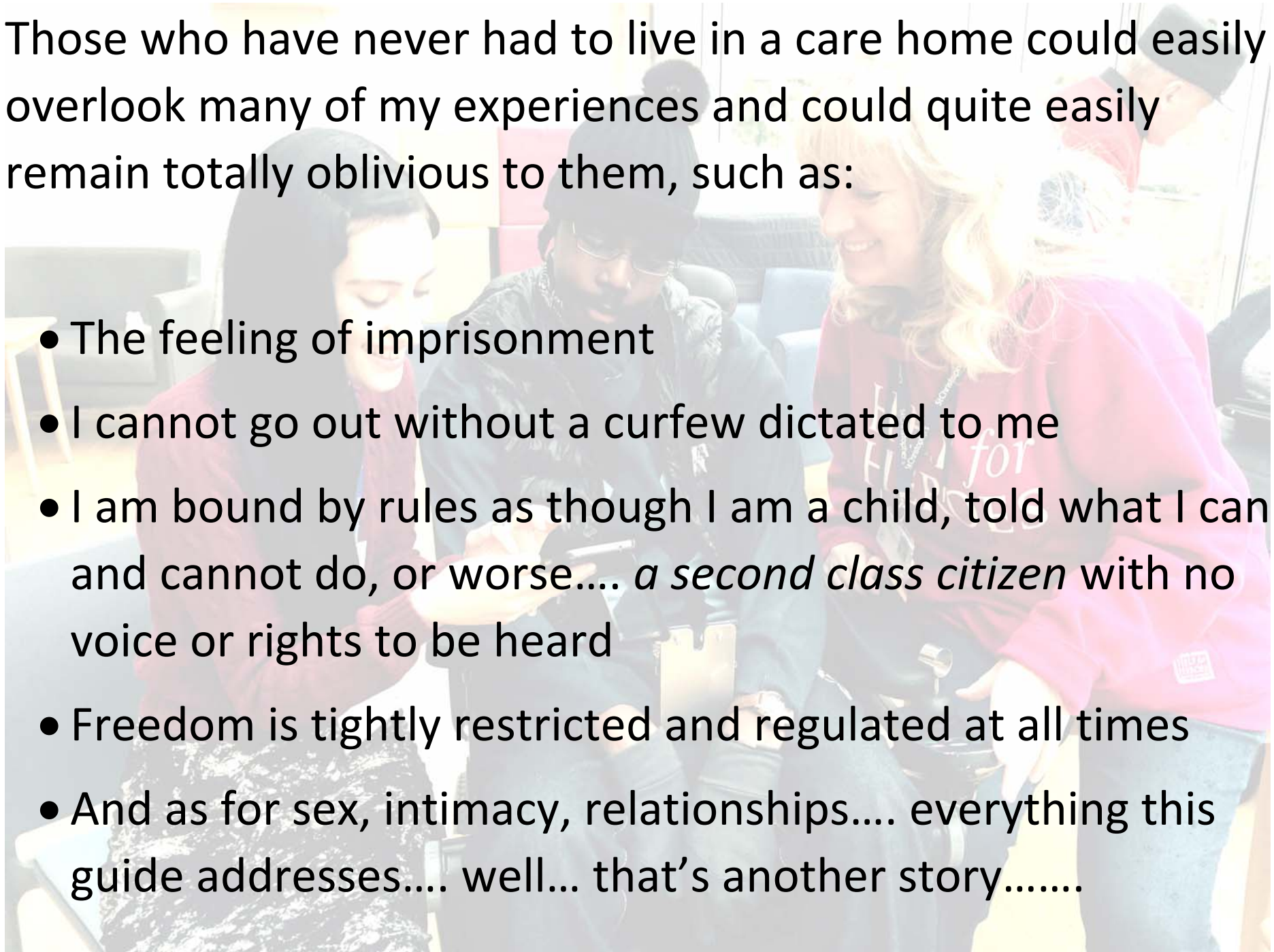
I refuse to let this defeat me, however, and see this part of my life as a challenge. For whatever you believe in, you can achieve as long as you truly believe it, hold onto that belief and work hard and then you will survive.

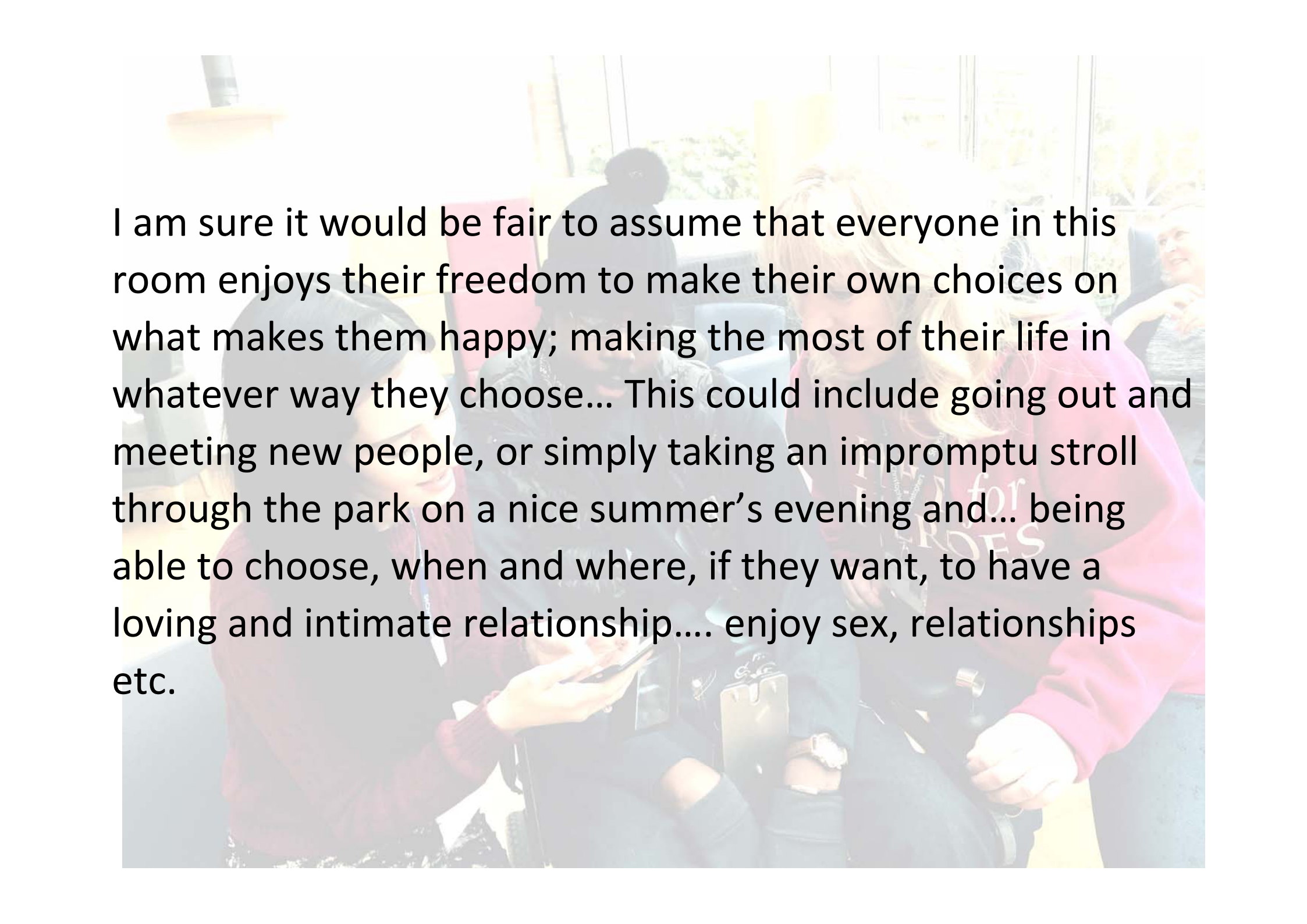
I would like to share my view point between living in a care home and living within the community and how this may influence sexuality. These are based on the difficulties I have had to contend with ever since I found myself in this situation.



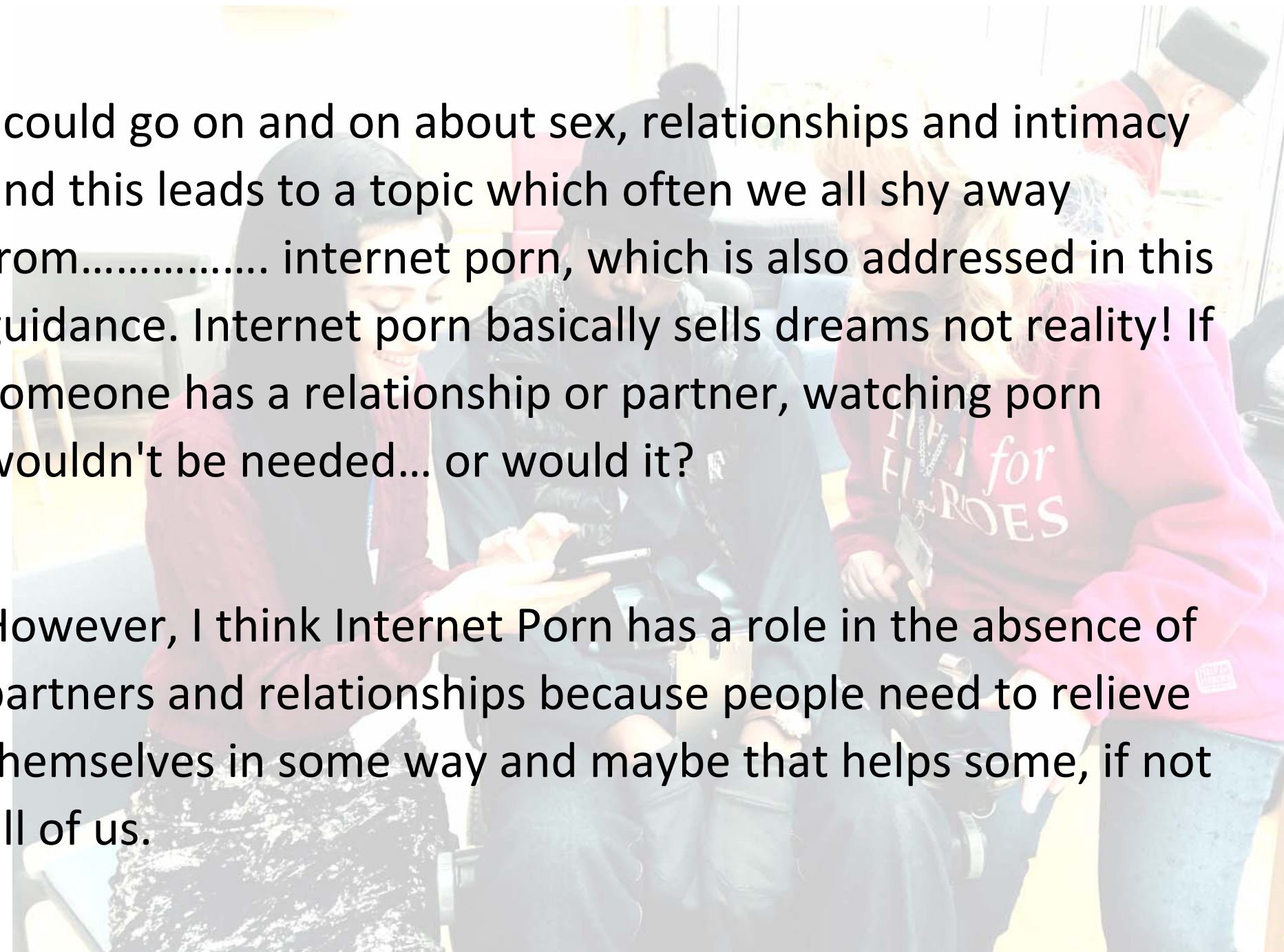
Those who have never had to live in a care home could easily overlook many of my experiences and could quite easily remain totally oblivious to them, such as:

- The feeling of imprisonment
- I cannot go out without a curfew dictated to me
- I am bound by rules as though I am a child, told what I can and cannot do, or worse.... *a second class citizen* with no voice or rights to be heard
- Freedom is tightly restricted and regulated at all times
- And as for sex, intimacy, relationships.... everything this guide addresses.... well... that's another story.....



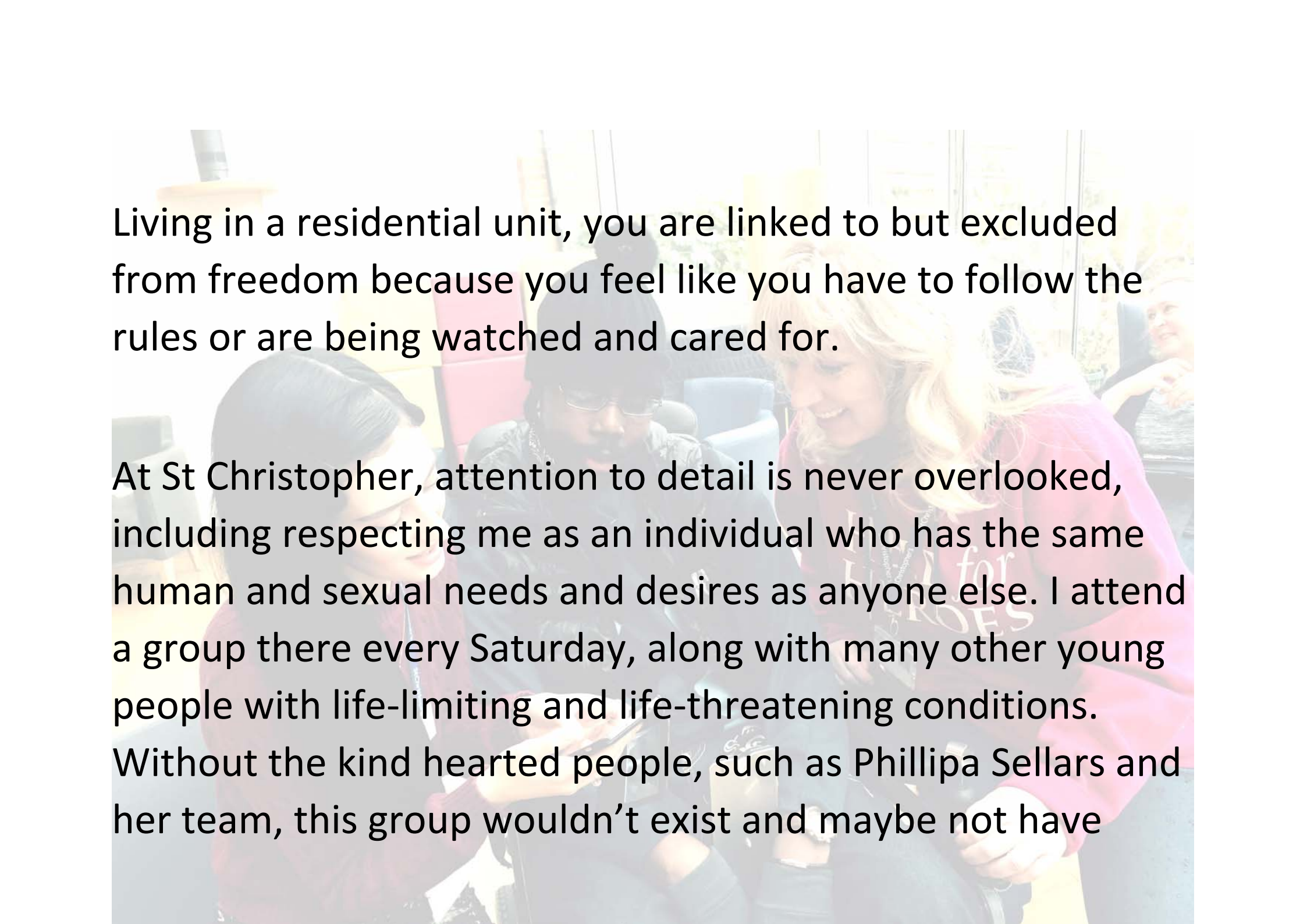


I am sure it would be fair to assume that everyone in this room enjoys their freedom to make their own choices on what makes them happy; making the most of their life in whatever way they choose... This could include going out and meeting new people, or simply taking an impromptu stroll through the park on a nice summer's evening and... being able to choose, when and where, if they want, to have a loving and intimate relationship.... enjoy sex, relationships etc.

A group of people are gathered in a room, possibly a classroom or meeting. In the foreground, a woman with long dark hair is looking down at a smartphone. To her right, a person in a red hoodie with the text "HEROES" is also looking at a device. In the background, another person is wearing a black cap and a red shirt. The scene is brightly lit, and the overall atmosphere appears to be one of focused activity or discussion.

I could go on and on about sex, relationships and intimacy and this leads to a topic which often we all shy away from..... internet porn, which is also addressed in this guidance. Internet porn basically sells dreams not reality! If someone has a relationship or partner, watching porn wouldn't be needed... or would it?

However, I think Internet Porn has a role in the absence of partners and relationships because people need to relieve themselves in some way and maybe that helps some, if not all of us.

A group of people are sitting together in a room, looking at a device. The image is semi-transparent, with text overlaid. The people are diverse in age and appearance. One person in the foreground is wearing a red hoodie with 'HEROES' visible. Another person is wearing a black hoodie with 'HEROES' visible. The background shows a room with blue chairs and a window.

Living in a residential unit, you are linked to but excluded from freedom because you feel like you have to follow the rules or are being watched and cared for.

At St Christopher, attention to detail is never overlooked, including respecting me as an individual who has the same human and sexual needs and desires as anyone else. I attend a group there every Saturday, along with many other young people with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions. Without the kind hearted people, such as Phillipa Sellars and her team, this group wouldn't exist and maybe not have

brought to the table the important work about sexuality, intimacy and relationships that we are discussing and launching today.

St Christopher's and this work has inspired me to challenge myself, to challenge you and to achieve my goals. I cannot thank you all enough for allowing me to speak out today.... and for producing this important guidance which I hope will help both care staff and managers in organisations to feel comfortable talking with people like me, about sex. I'm also



free to answer any questions both now and during the day. It has been a pleasure to address you today. Thankyou!