



PREVENT. RESIST. SUPPORT.

Episode 13: All about Zines
with feels zine



University
of Windsor

Office of Sexual Violence Prevention,
Resistance, and Support

Prevent Resist Support Podcast

Season 2 Episode 13: All About Zines with feels zine

Anne Rudzinski: Hi everyone, I'm Anne and this is Prevent Resist Support.

Music: I got your back my dear and I know that you got mine. I feel that hope and fear but I know we'll hold the line. Keep your head up. Keep your hand out when your breath is feeling short. Prevent, Resist, Support.

Anne: Hi everyone. Today we have a really special episode. At the Office of Sexual Violence, we love zines. We have our own zine that we put out with survivors of sexual violence on our campus. And we love zine culture. We love the whole idea of creating zines, distributing them. It's really beautiful and wonderful. Today we are visited by Hannah and Sarah. They are the co-creators of Feels Zine. Feels Zine is described as a publication about feelings. If you want to learn more about Feels Zine, you can check out their website which is feelszine.com F E E L S Z I N E dot com. Or you can check them out on social media. Their Instagram is @feelszine. So without any further wait, let's hear from Feels.

(Transition music)

Anne: Welcome, folks, I'm so excited to have you here on the podcast today.

Sarah Bharti: Thanks so much for having us. We're excited to be here.

Anne: Amazing. So can we start out with just like a really fast, Who are you? And how did you get into creating zines and Sarah, did you want to go first?

Sarah: Sure. So my name is Sarah Bharti. My pronouns are she/her, I am the editor at Feels Zine and I also work full time in mental health in Calgary, Alberta. And I'll let Hannah introduce herself and tell you a bit more about Feels.

Hannah Brown: Hey, I'm Hannah Brown. pronouns are she/her. And I'm the Creative Director of Feels, and co-creator with Sarah. And my daytime job is an Art Director and Graphic Designer. Little bit about Feels. So Feels is a publication, labour of love publication that we created, about feelings. Basically, each issue focuses on a different emotion, and we try to get the widest variety possible of stories and contributors to present different perspectives, perspectives that we may not have heard in mainstream media before, and trying to really normalize what, you know, feelings are, what being vulnerable means and trying to create a safe space for vulnerability and openness.

Anne: That's amazing. And you've been doing this for a while now.

Hannah: Yeah, it's, we just celebrated our fifth year of publishing. So 15 issues under our belt, working on the 16th, it feels really wild to say that it kind of feels like yesterday.

Anne: That is a very long time for a zine series, I think especially, which is very cool.

Hannah: Yeah, we've been very lucky. I think the two of us, you know, pairing up has really kept this project going, we keep each other quite accountable. And I mean, I'm gonna knock on wood here saying we've never missed a deadline. So

Anne: That's amazing. And they're beautiful. I'm gonna post them on our Instagram so folks can see them, but they're like a really beautifully produced zine, too.

Hannah: Thank you so much.

Anne: Can we for the listeners that are not familiar with zines, what is a zine? Can we get into just some of like, the basic background on what zines are? Because I think some folks are not familiar with them and have never heard of zines before.

Sarah: Yeah, totally. So zines have been around for gosh, about 100 years now. They started off as sort of self published sci fi. I don't know what else to call it, but a zine, but it kind of started in the Sci Fi world. And then as time passed, it got picked up by the punk scene, I would say for our zine, it's quite inspired by the riot girl movement of the 90s, which was also a big part of zine culture, but broad strokes, zines are sort of non commercial, non professional magazines, so you can make them however you want. Historically, they've been photocopied, and the history of the photocopier kind of goes hand in hand with it. We print with a risograph printer, which Hannah can tell you a little bit more about, but it's also pretty popular amongst zine fans as the printing style. But yeah, it's sort of we have no mandate beyond the ones we set for ourselves. We get to pick the message. We have no publisher, we have no kind of no rules, publishing, self publishing, which is what we love about it so much, that we can do whatever we want. And we're only beholden to to ourselves and our community, rather than, say, funding or publishers or ads or anything like that. So yes, or non commercial, non professional magazine publishing.

Anne: That's one of the things that I love about zines is that anybody can share any message they want, it's not kind of linked to a body that assesses it and decides whether or not it will be likeable or not likeable or popular or not popular. And one of the things we talked about when we prepped for this episode was the idea that some zines are very curated and like beautiful, and some of them are kind of scrappy, right. So they don't always have to be super artistic.

Sarah: Yeah, that's what we love about them, too. We're big fans of zines. And they kind of can be whatever you want them to be. And historically, they've been a way of getting messages out there that are against the grain or against what's being put out there by big magazines, by the

news. It's sort of a way of delivering your own news and your own message. It's pretty cool.

Anne: Love that. So then the next question is, you know, who are zines for, who makes zines, who reads zines, like, you know, what is the community of folks that are engaging with this?

Hannah: I would say zines are kind of for everyone, or at least anyone who wants to engage with them. I think, traditionally, and even now, definitely, to an extent it is not mainstream, though, I think zines are becoming much more mainstream these days. I think zines are for people who want to seek out other avenues of information, who wants to seek out community who want to seek out art, literature, culture, personal stories. And I think that can really be anyone. I think the trick is finding them. And you know, what, once you find some zines that you like, or some creators that you like, following them, it's really an interesting and beautiful web of creativity and honesty.

Anne: Yeah, so that, I guess, brings up another question for me, where do people find zines? I don't know. I want to know where are you folks find zines. I find them on I think like, mostly like Instagram and Etsy.

Sarah: I think like, what I like about zines is sort of once you once you start looking for them, you find them everywhere. Like they kind of are everywhere. If you're if you're keeping your eyes open, I know like, you know, the privilege of traveling pre COVID. And I would be walking down the street in like Lisbon and I ran into like a little shop selling zines or Berlin, they're kind of everywhere, if you go into the independent arts areas, which which most cities have most out, like, everybody likes art. And I think you can kind of find them anywhere. But we especially like going to zines fairs and festivals and art book fairs. They're in a lot of places like that. And we've been really lucky that you know, living in cities in Canada, there's stores that are willing to sell zines and take on those little guys that are making them for themselves and put them in shops for people to find but yeah, definitely on on social media on Etsy, but I think we're kind of seeing them more and more. If you're if you're keeping your eyes peeled for them.

Anne: I love that that makes it sound like a little bit of a like fun challenge, like a little scavenger hunt.

Sarah: Absolutely.

Hannah: Yeah, totally think that way, because I know we've we've tabled at zines fairs before. And, you know, we'll always take a break and take our wallet and go for a walk, knowing that we're going to find something that we haven't found before and become obsessed with. So it's fun. It's like a little collection. It's like, I don't know, just just gathering new information and getting inspired. Yeah, I think I think we always end up leaving fairs, with quite a few new zines in our pockets.

Anne: I love that. I feel like that's also such a unique experience to like, walk around a fair and like, look at all the booths and talk to the people who made them. And I feel like, at least in Windsor, we're not doing as much of that during COVID, which is kind of a bummer.

Hannah: Yeah, I definitely miss zine fairs in the community around them and speaking with people who are just so excited to see what you've made and talk about it. And hopefully that comes back soon. Fingers crossed that we get back to that level of in person community that we used to have.

Anne: Absolutely. So why make a zine? Why would somebody decide to create a zine? And then we'll follow up with why did you start your zine?

Sarah: Why not make a zine? Yeah, I think there's I think we started our zine as a way of, like, we've talked about this, it's kind of funny, it started as a way for us to express ourselves in a way that we hadn't been able to before and make space for that expression. And over the five years that we've been doing it, it's sort of evolved into us, then taking that space that we made for ourselves and finding a way to open it up to make space for others, who also maybe don't have a place where they feel safe enough to share their experiences or their voices because we are a little bit unique in that our focus is very much on talking about tough feelings from individual perspectives.

Anne: That's amazing. Can we get the origin story of Feels Zine? Is that, I don't know if you folks prepped that or if you're willing to share it, but I know I heard it a little bit when we had our meeting. But I would love for our listeners to know about how you started your work.

Hannah: Oh, yeah, sure. So we started basically, there was a Toronto art book fair on, it was, I think spring 2016. We went to the art book fair. I just wanted to go and look around look at stuff. I had heard about it, I'd heard that it was really nice. So Sarah and I went together. And we were walking around looking at all the booths looking at everything that everyone was making, and publishing, and just getting really inspired. And then we left the fair. And I just turned to Sarah. And I was like, Do you want to make a zine? And she was like, Yeah, sure. And I was like, Cool, cool. And then she's like, what is it going to be about? And I was like, I don't know, I'm not sure yet. Let's regroup on that. And then I think it was the next day, maybe, Sarah? I think it was the next day where either both of us texted each other an idea, like one of us was like, Oh, this is what we should say, this is what we should talk about, oh, and this is going to be the name. So I like, for some reason, it just, I mean, for some reason, I think our partnership is very kismet this entire time that we've been creating the zine, but we were just on the same page right away. We said, you know, let's talk about feelings. And, you know, both of us have had history of, first of all, being very emotional individuals, we will always be those people. And not always having the space to share that or feeling like we can't, or that we need to hold back or that, you know, we're quote unquote too much, or that our feelings are over the top, or something like that. And so, you know, that's really what we want to talk about, we wanted to say, you know, what, like, we have feelings, here we are, and, you know, especially as feminized people, you know, were put into this category of, you know, you feel too much or you're too intense, or you know, all that thing, we really want to break that down and just be like, look, okay, first of all, you can't feel too much. And hopefully, we can all express feelings in the way that we want to and have the ability to and have the safety to, and just, you know, open it up to not just our community, to the broader community to talk about feelings to, you know, men to talk about feelings as well. There's so much stigma around what we share, and who we are as individuals and how we self identify, and how we relate to the outside

world. So that's basically how Feels started. We came up with the name, we came up with the idea. And then I think we had one brainstorming meeting. And we came up with a few ideas for what we wanted to do for our first issue, which was anxiety, then we just started taking photos, we reached out to some friends who we knew had written about or had made art about anxiety in the past, and we connected with them and asked them if they wanted to be a part of the first issue. And I think we had maybe eight or nine contributors that issue and it was 30 pages. So it's very small. We published the first one had a great big party, and people loved it. And we were like, so blown away by the response. And you know, we sold out of our issues really quickly, and then just kind of snowballed from there. And when we put out our call for submissions for the second one, they just piled in, and were honestly so shocked that people wanted to submit so quickly too. The day before the launch, we were getting ready of the first issue. And we were like, we could just not have anything like we have all this hype. And you know, we've got it on social media, and people are coming here and like, they don't even know if we've got a product, they don't even know what it is, we don't even know if they're gonna like it. And they did. And so far, they still do. So it's just been real luck and work hard work, and a lot of work from the people in our community who have submitted to us. So without them we wouldn't, we wouldn't have a zine.

Sarah: We also, like, between Hannah's design background and my mental health background, the idea came pretty naturally because of the content of both of our lives, as well as our relationship with each other. We've been friends since we were like 13. And so feelings and big feelings of mental health have been things that we've always expressed privately with each other and shared with each other. But creating space where there's also room for activism and people telling their own stories instead of the stories being told for them was also really important, which is, I think, sort of why magazine, it's so that, you know, you can tell your own story and your own words and you can put the message out the way you want it to be heard instead of the way it tends to be told to us a lot of times.

Anne: Yeah, I think this is great. The only thing I wanted to add was, you know, we'll put the info for where to find the zine and our episode description.

So if you folks are like wow, I really want to read this we'll make sure to tag the social media. We'll share your own website where folks can pick up copies of the zine so we'll make sure everyone has access to that.

Hannah: Yeah, feelzine.com We have a dot com.

Anne: It's very official. I love that. Okay, so I think one of the things that I loved about our planning chat for this episode was the idea that I think when we talked about zines, and some of the values that were attached to zines, I feel like we just like really synched up on that, and what we thought about why zines are important, and why folks should engage with them, or might be interested in engaging with them. So can we talk about that values piece? What might lead folks to engage with zines? What are some of the values behind the creation of it or of reading zines? What do we feel about values?

Sarah: So there's a lot of different ways you can go that's sort of the beauty of about a zine is that it can be it can be for anybody and from any perspective, but I think part of it does come down to that sort of that DIY, broken down ethos that is like, if I want to make it, I'm going to make it and it's not about having a specific skill set or an education in design or writing or anything like that it is about this sort of do it yourself. If you have something you want to say you can say it thing. But I also think that one thing that we found that is really important to us about sort of zine culture and zine values is the sense of community. We've always been very felt very welcomed with the other with other zine makers, regardless of sort of how people are making things, or why they're making things there is this community where they build each other up, it's so supportive and quite nurturing, which is really lovely.

Anne: So then the other thing I think that we talked about that was really interesting was how zines relate to community and how it relates to creating communities and sustaining communities. And so I would love to hear your thoughts about zines and community.

Hannah: Zines I feel they are community they are, even if you're just one solo author or publisher, creator of a zine, putting something out there, that resonates with other people as, creates community. And we have been

so lucky, as we mentioned, to be able to foster community through the work that we've been doing. And it feeds itself. You know, people, as Sarah mentioned, people meet other people who are interested in zine and sharing and creating work together and collaboration. And it's a way of people getting together and creating and sharing stories. And when you publish something that resonates with someone else, it's so powerful. And sometimes, especially during the pandemic, you know, we've been creating the zine and we aren't able to have you know, our in person launch events, or we aren't able to table and sell it in person. So we we sometimes forget that the community is out there, because we're sitting behind the screen working. And then anytime we get feedback, or, you know, someone shares something on social media about, you know, how a piece in the zine has affected them and help them through something. It's just so wonderful. Because, you know, that's the purpose is to communicate and to connect.

Sarah: Yeah, I remember so many times like to talk on that community piece and connecting with people because it is it does come down to connection. That's what community it's right. It's it's groups of people connected together. And one of the things that I definitely miss is when we're sort of be at a zine event, and we'll be tabling and somebody will come up and be like, oh, and they'll be going through the different topics, which for us are just a laundry list of feelings, some more difficult than others. And people will just start telling us their story. Because they'll be like, Oh, you're talking about like anxiety, and they'll tell us a story, or we're talking about fear. We're talking about anger, and people want to share and people want to connect. And zines are sort of about making space, when you're putting out something personal in the world. If it connects to somebody else, then they're going to connect with you. And that's sort of the best, the best bit about scenes.

Anne: So I'm curious, this is maybe a bit of a like non sequitur, but do each of you have a favourite issue of your zine?

Hannah: Yeah, I think so. It's funny, like each time we publish one, we're like, this is the one. I think we have a few standout favourites. But I'm about to say them and then I'm like, No, but then also this one. Oh, but but then this one, so I don't know, Sarah, do you have I know that freedom

issue was something really a really poignant issue for us that we worked on.

Sarah: Exactly. That is the one that always comes to mind.

Hannah: Yeah.

Sarah: Like we've always had a political lens on our issues. And there's always been an element of activism to everything that we do. When you're talking about mental health and putting out messages especially from a lens of like, whose stories are usually told and how do you make space for other stories? The issue on freedom was sort of a turning point for us in terms of making a more politicized issue being very intentional with what stories were going to be told that when I think it's it feels really special. Especially at the time when it happened when so much was going on in the world. That one feels really special. I kind of love all of them for different reasons and like there's little bits of each of them that are like, that's so special. Even like, I love our pleasure issue. I thought that was such a great issue and such a, like different. They're all so different. I think that's sort of what makes them special. And we're always surprised by the submissions we get in the way people interpret things that I think it's just nice to always be surprised and always hear like, no matter how connected you are, everybody's perspectives are so different. And that sort of the bringing all the perspectives together has been really nice. So it's hard to pick on but like freedom is always the one that comes to mind for me. When like, right off the jump.

Hannah: Yeah, yeah, I think the freedom one pleasure. Yeah, yeah. It's fun, because we'll work on a lot of heavy topics. And for some reason, I don't know if it's like masochistic, but we choose really heavy topics for January issues to like really hit home the seasonal affective disorder and just like general sadness and like, intense feelings, but you know, just just like as we when we create the zine, you know, every feeling is valid, every feeling is important. And every feeling has multifaceted sides to it. But it's so fun doing a happy issue, like we just did our joy issue. And as Sarah mentioned, our pleasure issue like those are fun. And and we're we're working on sexy for this upcoming September. So it's fun. You

know, one issue we'll talk about fear or loss and death and dying. And the next one, we're looking at sexy pictures. So it's fun.

Anne: That is amazing. And I love that you both highlighted the freedom zine, because that's the one that I have. So that's the only one that I've read. But that was the one that I read it. I was like, Okay, I gotta get in touch with these folks.

Hannah: I'm glad. We've we've got a lot of copies still, if anyone else is interested in.

Anne: Yeah, I think we might have to do like a little giveaway.

Hannah: Yeah, totally.

Anne: That'd be super fun. Okay, so then. Now I think it's important for us to talk about how do people make zines? If our listeners are sitting there and thinking maybe I want to make a zine? How do you get started? How do you like start a zine? How you start to think about it? And how do you make scenes at home? So maybe you could tell me a little bit about how you started your zine, which is like a bigger production than probably most of our listeners might start, and then how folks can make their own kind of like smaller zines at home.

Hannah: Yeah, people ask me, you know, how do you make the zine? What do you do? And I kind of sheepishly say, Well, I make magazines for a living. So I, you know, I know the tricks of the trade, and I use the professional software and stuff like that. So from a perspective of how Feels is published. You know, we work in InDesign, we work in Google Docs, and all of the more professional software, but you don't have to, you really don't. And I think the main thing that you need is an idea or something to share. If you have people collectively who want to share, you know, getting a little collection together, some images, whether it's, you know, you want to cut them out of a magazine, make a collage or draw something, and a photocopier. Really, the wonderful thing about zines is that you don't have to be a professional, you don't have to be a professional writer, you don't have to be a professional publisher, designer, any of that. It's it started out as DIY and there will always be

that DIY element. So I would say, yeah, if you have an idea, write some stuff down, glue some images to piece of paper, go and photocopy it, fold it up, give it a title page, and a catchy name. And you can pass it around. Sarah, what was that movie called that we watched together with Amy Poehler?

Sarah: Oh yeah, Moxie, it's funny to see zines and like a major movie with big actors. So Moxie. Yeah.

Hannah: Yeah. If anyone feels like, if any of the listeners feel really engaged and excited about zines I would recommend watching that movie came out maybe a few years ago. And it's yeah, this one girl who decides to create an underground zine in her high school and inspired by the riot girl movement, and you know, the, the original zines of that era, and it's so much fun. Sarah and I watched it, you know, I think last year and we got so jazzed, and we're like, let's make a zine. Oh, wait, we already make one. Let's make another one. And that really illustrates how easy it is to make one. A character got like a Sharpie marker, wrote all over some pages, glued some stuff down, photocopied it and it made such an impact in that film, but it is you know, based in, in reality. Go to your Staples. Staples will do it for you.

Anne: That's where I take all my zines. I used to work at Staples. I used to work in the copy and print centre and I would have all the time to like fiddle around with the printers and try to figure out how to print them which was which was fun at the time. Yeah. Is there anything about zines that we didn't talk about that you would really like to share before we kind of start to wrap up?

Sarah: Not that I can think of, I think like the other I guess in terms of the like, how do you make a zine like another great way to figure out how to where to start as soon as look at zines, like the really cool. There's loads around if you know, if you know where to look, or even if you don't, you can just go on Etsy, or Instagram, or yeah, I know, some universities even have zine libraries now, a lot of cities, have zine libraries that you can even go to and look at them for free. So that's a really other great way to get started is just see what other people are doing it kind of, it's

one of those things that feels maybe a little bit like a daunting task until you look at it and you're like, oh, you know what, I think I could do this.

Anne: Yeah, I always think about how like, it doesn't have to be fancy, like, you could make like a real scrap zine. And it could be kind of like scribble, you could make it with markers or with glue and paper. Like it doesn't have to be super fancy. And I love that because I think we always think our hobbies have to be like 10 out of 10 Excellent all the time. It's sometimes you can just make something that's like just okay, it doesn't have to be like super polished.

Hannah: Oh, gosh, yeah, you hit the nail on the head there about like hobbies having to be 10 out of 10. It's it's nice to, to yeah, be imperfect. And the nature of zine making is imperfect. It is rough. And Sarah mentioned earlier, risograph printing, and you know how that's becoming a popular method to print zines and independent art and things like that. And that's how we print our zine. And the whole process is this archaic process, I think it was started in the 80s. Might want to fact check that. But these old machines that kind of look like big, clunky photocopiers and they print, you know, different colours, it's slightly offset, it's slightly grainy, it's definitely got a texture to it. And it's also imperfect. So part of the reason we went with that printing is, you know, first of all the colour and the beautiful spectrum that we could get, but also kind of our product is in a way more polished than some but also we want to show that it's imperfect that you know, some issues will have smudges here and there or things will be offset and the image will be a little wonky. And we like that it creates imperfections. Because you know, we all we all are imperfect, and how can we strive to be to create perfect things? Yeah, it's it's more fun to be messy. I think. One other thing we like to say, if anyone listening is considering starting a zine or starting any project really is, you know, have your idea and and start working on it. But also tell everyone about it. Like, that's how we started, we kind of came up with the idea. And we scrolled away for a little bit and kind of formed it. But then we started telling people and then when we saw people, they'd be like, Oh, how how's the zine going? What are you doing? And it kind of partially kept us on track and also kind of inspired us, right? Because people were interested in what we were creating, and you would follow up, and then they tell somebody else. And yeah, if

you want to create something, start working on it. But also tell people tell people you love. Tell people who are excited about art and making and who knows, you might tell someone they'd be like, Yeah, I want to do that, too. Let's do it together. So talking about it is great.

Anne: Amazing. Well, thank you so much for being here today. This was such a fun chat. I'm so excited for everybody to hear about scenes and to maybe start thinking about making some scenes, and to our listeners, if you make a zine, I would love for you to show it to us. That would be amazing. Is there any like one last message you would like to leave our listeners with like a takeaway or like a take home message?

Sarah: Yeah, we were talking about this earlier, we saw it in your questions. And it's a good question. And we kind of, I think kind of sums up a lot of what we've been talking about, especially in this last bit of the conversation. But we've kind of been sold a bill of goods socially about who gets to make stuff and who gets to create it and what you need to have, and be in order to do that. And it's just not true that sort of what makes zines so beautiful is that they are for anybody with an interest anybody who wants to be a part of it. And there's a really big sense of community in that it's that it's just you're a part of it, because you want to be a part of it. And that's that's it. Those are the only rules. That's why we love zines.

Anne: I love that. Well, I'm feeling so inspired to make a zine. I probably won't make one tonight, but I got a little bit of energy. Maybe I'll go watch Moxie. And then yeah, we'll share all of the info about Feels Zine with our listeners. And I'm so excited to potentially have you folks back at some point or maybe to another collab. So thanks so much for being here.

Hannah: Yeah we would love to. It's been so nice to chat with you. And one other thing I want to say too is if anyone is interested in making zines and they find one that they like, if they find us on social media or any of the number of other people who create independent publications, reach out to them, ask them some questions. People are usually willing to offer what they know and help other people create because it's it again, to hammer home the idea of community it really is a community

and I know when when people reach out to us and ask us you know, how did you do this? Or how did you get it in stores? Or how do you print it? We love to share that information because it's just fostering more of this creativity in this community building around zine making so yeah, reach out.

Anne: Amazing. Well, thank you so much for being here today.

(Transition music)

Anne: So that was Hannah and Sarah from Feels Zine. Again, all of the info about feels seen will be in our episode description, but you can check out their website feelzine.com or find them on social media, their Instagram is at [feelzine](https://www.instagram.com/feelzine). Thanks for joining us today and we hope that you are inspired to create a zine or read a zine, find some zines, check out Windsor Zine Fair, do something awesome with zines, we would love that.