


# Non-Sexual Kinky Safe Spaces – Why they Matter

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**AS PART OF A VERY SEX-POSITIVE LIFESTYLE, FETISH PARTIES AND BDSM EVENTS CAN OFTEN BE HIGHLY SEX-FOCUSED, OR IN THE LEAST, VERY SEX FRIENDLY. FOR MANY IN OUR COMMUNITY, FETISH AND BDSM PRACTICES ARE FORMS OF SELF-EXPRESSION AND IDENTITY, IN ADDITION TO BEING A PART OF SEXUALITY. BUT FOR SOME, THERE MAY BE A STRUGGLE TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS SEXUALLY AND SEX-FOCUSED ENVIRONMENTS CAN BECOME EXTREMELY INTIMIDATING. THESE FOLKS STILL WANT TO BE A PART OF THE COMMUNITY AND PRACTICE THEIR FETISH OR KINK, BUT WHEN THERE IS AN UNDENIABLE PRESSURE TO GET IT ON AT MOST SOCIAL GATHERINGS, IT MAKES IT QUITE DIFFICULT TO DO SO. MORE SO, WHEN SOCIAL INTERACTIONS ARE GUIDED BY THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF CONQUERING ONE ANOTHER, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEEPER CONNECTIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER GET LOST IN THE SHUFFLE? EITHER WAY, NON-SEXUAL KINK AND FETISH EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT. THEY ARE GREAT AS INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR THOSE WHO DON'T WANT TO INCLUDE SEX IN THEIR KINK OR FETISH, BUT ALSO A PERFECT WAY TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS. BESIDES, IT'S ALSO JUST REALLY FUN TO GET INTO GEAR AND HANG OUT!**

Fortunately, there are loads of other ways to participate in fetish and kink communities that don't include sex. There are terrific workshops, masterclasses, group talks and other forms of educational or informative events. Art exhibitions and concerts too all play their part in informing and connecting members of our broader community.

Since the last decade, many social groups started to surface in Europe and with that, many social events have been happening in small pockets across each country as well. This is likely due to several reasons. Many bars and fetish-safe spaces across Europe had to close their doors, leaving the fetish scene with fewer places to meet. At the same time, many new fetish brands have come up, especially online, making kink more accessible and kinky self-expression easier. Plus social media continues to cut our geographical limitations, making it easier to connect with like-minded folks. And of course, we can't forget that social events are just plain fun, often quite relaxed and one of the best excuses to gear up and hang out.

For many kinksters, social groups and events are like a family reunion, a safe place within a tribe. Social media, being the new way to communicate, allows the visibility of local initiatives and the desire to travel to meet other kinksters across the globe. And it works! From Mexico to Taiwan, fetish liberation has flourished in exciting and colourful ways. The increase in folks showing pride in public addresses the taboo around fetish and BDSM. Additionally, being recognized in numbers both normalizes and validates our communities within society and helps to build better visibility and acceptance.





### Barcelona Rubber Men

And what a range of events there are! Beyond meet and greets and theme nights at bars, there are the traditional elections, BDSM workshops, pub crawls, barbecues, and even pool parties. Fetish events like Folsom Europe and Darklands in Antwerp also have some amazing non-sexual moments on the schedule. Mister B's WINGS Talks in Berlin was an amazing opportunity for like-minded folks to come together to have a much-needed conversation about some contemporary social issues. And one of our favourite events, the Classic Meets Fetish Concert during Darklands. This concert is a wonderful way to connect with other kinksters on a level beyond kink, in this case, a shared passion for classical music. It takes place in a beautiful church, everyone is all geared up, including the performers, and everyone shares a beautiful evening. Many long-lasting friendships were made this way, time and time again.

Unlike a night in a private sex club or a nightclub, like a night at Lab or Hard On, when we meet someone new in a more relaxed and social setting, it can easier lead to real conversation, which is not guided by the end-goal of sex. We might even realize we have more in common than just our fetishes and make an even deeper connection.



Nonetheless, our sexually driven spaces should be cherished, as a sex-positive and open community, but we should always remember, we can connect in many more ways beyond sex and equally appreciate our non-sexual safe spaces too. That goes for everyone, including those who connect with others better in these spaces. And who knows, maybe we can even make many new friends when we do.



