



ARE YOU  
LIKE OK?

A GAME

FOR 4-10 PLAYERS

By CARLY KOCUREK

# ARE YOU LIKE OK?

**It's September, 2004. You're at the Neko Case concert at the Parish. The night is perfect, except: A woman in the bathroom is sad. In *Are You Like, OK?* your job is to help her. Or be her. But the point is, we're all in this bathroom together, and the headliner starts at midnight.**

***Are You Like, OK* is a freeform LARP for 4-10 players set in a women's bathroom. It can be played remotely, in person, or even via text. This is a game about spontaneous community and caretaking.**



## SOUND CHECK

To play, you need the game booklet, something to keep time with, and (optionally) something from your purse to share with your new friend(s).

Purse items might include:

- mints or gum
- tissues
- safety pins
- adhesive bandages
- pads or tampons
- promotional buttons, stickers, lip balms, etc.

Choose one player to be the Sad Girl. Sad Girl has some responsibility to guide the encounter, since her sadness is the inciting incident. You can roll a die, choose at random, or just pick the person who most needs a little bit of encouragement right now.

Spend some time as a group identifying any topics that should be off the table. For

example, if one of the players just got laid off, that might not be the thing for Sad Girl to be sad about this time.

All players should pick or build a character and spend 5 minutes choosing their character's name and adding any biographical details they want.

## START THE SHOW

1. Decide as a group what time it is. The headliner takes the stage at midnight, and your goal is to help Sad Girl get to the point where she thinks she can leave the bathroom and enjoy the show. Do you have 5 minutes? 15 minutes? Is it between sets, or are you all ditching the opening act to take care of Sad Girl?
2. One player who is not Sad Girl should volunteer to serve as timekeeper; any player is eligible. They are responsible for starting the clock when play starts and for offering reminders (at their discretion and in character) when the show's about to start.
3. Play begins when the timekeeper asks "Are you like, OK?" Sad Girl responds, "It just makes me so sad." She should then explain, with as much or as little detail as she wants, what "it" is.

## OPENING ACT

Once Sad Girl has explained why she is sad, each player character should, in turn, chime in to do one of the following:

- Ask a question
- Offer advice
- Sympathize
- Share an anecdote
- Offer material support (ie, something from your purse)

Player characters may choose to respond to one another or to Sad Girl. All players should think about how to share speaking time. If you realize another player character has not had a chance to speak, consider asking them a question or invoking a character connection.



All characters except Sad Girl have at least one connection. Connections are not necessarily known by other characters but can come up through conversation or can be revealed. For example, "Wait, what's your last name? You look so familiar?" or "Did you used to work at Whole Foods?" could be used to pry out additional information and identify connections. Connections may be helpful or distracting depending on what player characters do with them.

The player who is Sad Girl should track whether other player character contributions make her feel better or worse and should telegraph that to the other players so they can adjust their contributions and interactions.

### FINAL ACT

Gameplay ends either when Sad Girl feels ok enough to go back out to enjoy the show **or** the timekeeper declares that Neko Case is starting right now.

The timekeeper should (in character) remind people when the show is about to start as they see fit.

If Sad Girl feels better, everyone can go back to the show. If she does not, each player character should decide whether they stay in the bathroom or make their excuses and head out.

### ENCORE

After the game is over, you could listen to *Live from Austin, TX* by Neko Case or watch the episode of *Austin City Limits* it's based on.

Or, head down memory lane: What's the best show you've been to? Who would you love to see live but haven't?

Or, for a softer landing: When's a time a stranger took care of you or that you took care of a stranger?

# WHAT'S YOUR DEAL, ANYWAY?

There must be a Sad Girl and any other 3 characters up to 8 total players. Characters are written as women and gender nonbinary, but can be played as any gender or no gender. The setting is based on a real women's bathroom at a real time and place, but every time we play a game, we build a whole new world.

### SAD GIRL

You are so sad that other people in the bathroom don't want to just leave you alone like that.

**You have no known connection to any other character.** You can choose your own age, occupation, and personal style. You should also identify the reason you came to this show. Maybe someone gave you a ticket? Or you have to review it for work, so you really need to get back out there? Or, you got tickets months ago and then got ditched? Your call.

Most importantly: You need to choose a reason you are sad. For example:

- You have just gotten dumped
- You have just lost your job
- Your best friend ditched you for someone they're dating
- You're just so lonely
- You didn't get the job or into the graduate program you applied to
- You lost something valuable
- Other sadness of your choosing

### J----

J is older than most of the people at this show and came with her husband. She's in her mid 40s, has on expensive casual clothes.

J works in public relations, advertising, or marketing.

She is confident, polished, and stylish.

Weakness: she can be a teeny bit condescending without meaning to.

She is at this show for date night.

She's worried about the babysitter texting her.

In the bathroom to check her makeup and take a couple Advil -- her back hurts.

Her ex-husband is K's cousin.

## N---

N met up at the show with their coffee shop coworkers. They are mid 20s and look cooler than everyone else.

N is a sculptor who's had their work in group gallery shows around Austin.

They are reserved quiet, and highly observant.

Their weakness is that they get easily overwhelmed in crowds.

She's at the show for a coworker's birthday.

They're worried about how they'll get home tonight--cabs are expensive, but they've already paid for their ticket and a couple drinks, and the bus shuts down too early.

She came in the bathroom to take hide in the quiet for a minute.

They used to work at the nature camp that J's kids go to. She went to high school with V's younger brother.

## K---

K is a graduate student in her late 20s. She totally wore a cardigan to this concert.

K works in the university's writing center.

She is smart, opinionated, and curious.

Weakness: She is extremely impulsive.

She is at the show because Neko Case is one of her favorite musicians. She came to the show alone, on purpose, but some guy she met on OKCupid showed up, looked at her for 5 minutes, then left. Dating sucks.

She's worried about being single.

She came in the bathroom to take off her tights --it's too hot.

She used to work at the same coffee shop that N works at, but not at the same time.

## V----

V is in her late 20s and recently got engaged. She wears a lot of black clothes and silver jewelry.

V is a high school biology teacher.

She is astute, funny, and outgoing.

Weakness: She is pretty judgmental.

She is at the show because, basically, her best friend wanted to go. (Said friend has been in the merch line for like an hour.)

She's worried her BFF doesn't like her partner.

She came in the bathroom to pee.

She goes to the same yoga studio as J. Her partner gave her one of N's sculptures as a gift.

## S---

S is in her early twenties and is wearing jeans and a band shirt (definitely not for any band playing).

S works as an administrative assistant at a law office downtown, but she also blogs about 2-3 concerts a week.

S is organized, calm, and practical.

Weakness: Insecure about her career and writing.

She is at the show because she interviewed one of the opening bands and got a comped ticket.

She's worried that her writing will only ever just be a hobby.

She came in the bathroom to (hopefully) find someone, anyone she knows at this show. So far, no luck.

She got her undergraduate degree in the same program where K is now a grad student. She went to the same camp where N used to work and J's kids go when she was a kid.

X---

X is in her early late 20s and is wearing baggy shorts and a polo shirt. Her arms are covered in bright, comics-inspired tattoos.

X is a personal trainer at a small private gym -- a job she absolutely loves.

X is compassionate, deliberate, and gentle.

Weakness: She is a bad judge of character.

Her partner wanted to come to the show, so X tagged along. Their partner wanted to go up front, but X prefers to hang at the back. They'll find each other at the end.

She's worried about her partner, who seems pretty depressed lately.

She came in the bathroom to pee.

Her gym is down the block from the coffee shop N works at, and she goes there pretty often. One of her clients is J's best friend.

A---

A is in her early 30s. She's wearing a superhot dress because she's here with her friends but she's like 80% sure her ex is going to be here.

A is an electrical engineer at a semiconductor company.

A is generous, friendly, and careful.

Weakness: She lets her job eat her life.

She goes out with her friends most nights, and tonight, this was the place to be. The bands seem ok.

She's worried about whether this dress was the right thing to wear.

She came in the bathroom check her reflection and see if she can bum a cigarette -- she doesn't really smoke but like, she's out, so ...

Her ex is a classmate of K's. She and V have been at the same parties a few times, but never met.

R---

R could be anywhere between 30 and 50, nobody's really sure. She's wearing jeans and a black tshirt, some kind of goth earrings and sneakers.

R works at the local public radio station as an on-air personality.

R is clever, funny, and charismatic.

Weakness: She loves to be the center of attention.

She definitely heard there was going to be some kind of special guest on the bill, so she had to be here. But, she's being awfully coy about who it is. She came alone, but ran into some coworkers. They're all at the bar, though, and R doesn't drink.

She's worried that the rumor was just a rumor.

She came in the bathroom to pee.

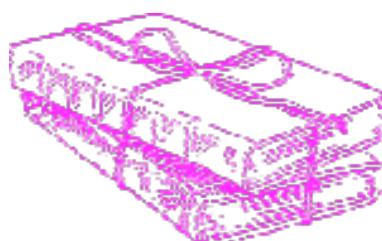
She reads S's blog. She's been to N's gallery shows. She and J have many, many friends in common but don't know each other at all.

?---

Build your own character by answering the following:

- How old are they?
- What are they wearing?
- How do they spend their time?
- What are 3 good qualities?
- What's 1 weakness?
- Why are they at the show?
- What are they worried about?
- Why are they in the bathroom?
- What connection might they have to the others? (1-3 total)

Don't forget to choose their name and pronouns.



**Are You Like, OK?** is a freeform LARP for 4-10 players set in a women's bathroom at a Neko Case show in 2004. This is a game about spontaneous community and caretaking. It can be played in person or remotely. Here's some suggestions for how that might work.

## In person

- Stock your purse or pockets with items your character might have handy. You can offer these to other player characters during the game as material aid.
- Dress as your character. It's 2004, so, it's a good time for skinny jeans, mesh-back hats, dramatic sleeves, and blazers worn in inexplicable combinations.
- Throw on some period-appropriate music.
- **ADVANCED:** Meet to play the game in an actual bathroom -- just choose one that isn't busy, because we've all suffered from bathroom inequity enough.

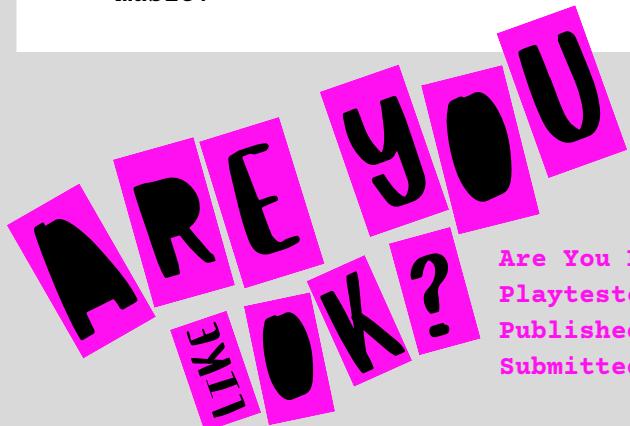
## Via video

- Consider staying to a smaller scale group of 4-6.
- Make a list of items your character might have handy. You can offer these to other characters during the game as (virtual) material aid.
- Dress as your character. It's 2004, so, it's a good time for skinny jeans, mesh-back hats, dramatic sleeves, and blazers worn in inexplicable combinations.
- Throw on some period appropriate music. You might want to nominate someone as the DJ in advance or pick a playlist.



## Via group text

- Even if playing via group text, agree on a fixed time to play and make sure the timekeeper sticks to their job. The timeline is important.
- Make a list of items your character might have handy. You can offer these to other characters during the game as (virtual) material aid.
- Each player should spend a few minutes during setup describing how their player character is dressed since you can't see each other.
- Each player can listen to their own personal selection of period appropriate music.



Are You Like OK? is a game by Carly Kocurek.

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