Healthy Relationships Program for LGBTQ+ Youth

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Welcome and Introductions

Introduce Yourself
• Name
• Gender pronouns (optional)
• What brings you to this session?

Overview

• Healthy Relationships Program (HRP) for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ+) Youth
• Pilot
• Revision Process and Feedback
• Revised Program
• Implications for Practice
Background

LGBTQ Youth
• Mental Health Challenges
• Interpersonal Issues
• GSA Programming

Program
• Coping Strategies
• Adaptation of Healthy Relationship Plus Program (HRPP)
  - Positive Mental Health and Skills Development

Original Program Sessions

1) Getting to Know You
• Introductions
• Group guidelines
• Terminology
• Stressors (family, school, media/culture, relationships)

2) The Power of Stereotypes
• What it means to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans

3) Shaping Our Views
• Beliefs about romantic and sexual relationships (family, friends, media, community)

4) Effects of Discrimination
• Microaggressors
• Media Representation

Original Program Sessions

5) Recognizing Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
• Sounds like, feels like, looks like

6) Knowing Your Values and Boundaries
• Four corners boundaries scenarios (Absolutely; Yes, but; No way; or No, but)
• Rights and responsibilities in a relationship

7) Warning Signs of Dating Violence
• Cutting ties (friend, family, community member)

8) Escalation of Dating Violence
• Myths and facts
• Relationship continuum (healthy, unhealthy, undecided)
Original Program Sessions

9) Leaving an Unhealthy Relationship
   • Barriers to leaving
   • Safety planning (people, emergency numbers, buddy system, safe routes)

10) Healthy Relationship Skills
    • Communication skills videos (aggressive, passive, assertive)

11) Healthy Conflict Resolution
    • Conflict resolution videos (delay, refusal, negotiation)

12) Taking Responsibility for Emotions
    • Coping with stress and anger (brainstorm ways to calm down, reduce stress, support friend who is stressed out)

13) Impacts of Substance Use and Abuse
    • Substance use in the media examples
    • When does substance use become a problem continuum (scenarios)
    • Impact of substance use/abuse (dating partner(s)/friends/family; school and work; health and wellbeing)

14) Mental Health and Wellbeing
    • Myths and Facts (quiz, quiz, trade)
    • Levels of concern (not, somewhat, very)
    • My supports (school, home, community, 3 positive coping strategies)

15) Helping Our Friends
    • Active listening skills
    • Tips for helping a friend (starting conversation, further in, try not to…)

16) Sharing and Celebrating
    • Building blocks (one significant concept each)
    • Review of learning (team competition)

Pilot (2015-2016)

Training
   • 1 day (Mental Health and Wellbeing, LGBTQ+ Content, HRP Overview)
   • N= 14 (12 facilitators, 2 school board employees)

Implementation
   • 8 public high school Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA)
   • 1 social/support group for LGBTQ+ Youth

Facilitator Feedback Methods
   • Tracking Sheets
   • Informal Feedback (i.e., emails, meetings)
   • Focus Group (n=8)
   • Post Program Survey (n=3)
Facilitator Feedback

Constructive
• Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Curriculum
• Easy-to-Follow
• Core Fourth R Skills

Critical
• LGBTQ+ Content
• Affirmative
• Time

Revision Process

• 2-Day Workshop with 7 Youth
  Day 1
  • Review Original Sessions
  • Start, Stop, Continue
  • Small Group Session Review
  • Wish for Program
  Day 2
  • 5 Revised Sessions
  • ‘Dear Facilitator’
  • 8-Day Rewriting Process

Start, Stop, Continue...

Start
• “Start with an overview of all programming”
• “Take home information of what we learned”
• “...more in-depth terminology with explanation”
• “Discussions from other types of oppression...”
• “Queer representation”
• “Start educating the facilitators/teachers”
• “More group discussions”
• “Trigger warnings”
Start, Stop, Continue...

Stop
- “Too many topics for session”
- “Long sessions in short time”
- “Stop emphasizing ‘well known’ topics”
- “crappy representation”
- “stressors we live this”
- “…’challenge’ victim narratives”
- “Stop leading with downers – lead with affirmation”
- “Overpowering cis/heterosexual relationships representation”

Start, Stop, Continue...

Continue
- “Group discussions”
- “Identifying healthy/unhealthy relationships”
- “Improving LGBTQ+ inclusion”
- “Take home resources (ex. Hotlines...)”
- “Continue exploring identities in an AFFIRMATIVE manner”
- “Teach more about dating violence – knowing what to look for”

Small Group Session Review

Content
- What do you think about the content?
  - Is the information accurate?
  - Is the information relevant to your life?
  - What information, if any, is missing?
  - What information should stay?

Learning Strategies
- Are the learning strategies/resources (e.g., videos, discussion questions, specific activities, etc.) helpful for exploring the session’s topic?
- What strategies/resources should be used to explore the topic?

Session Suggestions
- What would make the sessions better (e.g., different discussion questions, using alternate media, etc.)?
Wish For the Program

Affirmative
- “More affirming and positive”
- “More positivity”
- “More affirmation of being proud for who you ARE”

Fun
- “Be a fun and excellent program that people will enjoy!!”

Representation
- “More LGBTQ+ focused”
- “Inclusive and accurate sexuality and gender terminology”
- “Get more in depth in the diversity of identities, experience and people…”

Dear facilitator,

“I want you to keep in mind not everyone is on a binary, is sexual, only has one identity. There are many identities and many are on a spectrum. People might get triggered. Respect their identity. LGBTQ+ people are people, once you take out the hate we’re pretty much the same. Don’t rely on LGBTQ+ folks to define and explain your questions. Do research first – hear the stories straight from LGBTQ+ people (i.e., YouTube, Tumblr, etc.)”

“Respect pronouns, Do your research. Genital do not equal gender.”

“I need you to know that pronouns are very significant to some people so please never assume someone’s pronouns and always do the check ins. I need you to know that not all of us students are walking, talking LGBTQ+ encyclopaedias. If you don’t know a term, research it instead of asking students.”

“I want you to remember to allow and remind students to leave whenever they feel uncomfortable. I want you to remember to respect pronouns, sexuality, genders of student/people in general.”

...and I am a part of this program.

Summary of Program Changes

- LGBTQ+ Integration
- Affirmative
  - Positive representation
- Youth-Centered
  - Realistic and relatable material
  - Sample responses created by youth
- Relationship with Self and Others
  - Developing self and community building
Revised Program

SESSION 1: I HAVE A VOICE: Introduction to the Program
SESSION 2: MINE TO NAME: Identities/Ways of Being
SESSION 3: RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT: Values and Boundaries
SESSION 4: MY JOURNEY: Coming Out
SESSION 5: MY MIND MATTERS: Mental Health and Well-being
SESSION 6: IN THE KNOW: Impacts of Substance Use and Abuse
SESSION 7: I BELONG: Communities and Connections
SESSION 8: MY SUPER-POWER: Coping with Challenges
SESSION 9: WE ALL HAVE A SAY: Rights/Responsibilities/Consent
SESSION 10: MY VOICE, YOUR VOICE: Active Listening and Communication
SESSION 11: RIGHT AND TRUE: Communication Styles
SESSION 12: WORDS AND ACTIONS: Communicating Through Conflict
SESSION 13: SHIPS: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
SESSION 14: (RE)BUILDING TIES: Addressing Relationship Violence
SESSION 15: MY SAFETY: Exits and Safety Plans
SESSION 16: ALLIES: Being There for Others
SESSION 17: THE CONCLUDING CIRCLE: Share and Celebrate

Session #1

I HAVE A VOICE:
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Affirmation: I HAVE A VOICE

Skill: I am using my voice

Practice: Participating in the program in ways that feel right and true for me

Session #2

MINE TO NAME:
IDENTITIES/WAYS OF BEING

Affirmation: MY IDENTITY IS REAL, VALID, AND MINE TO NAME

Skill: I am aware of the many identities/ways of being, and expressions in communities

Practice: Reflecting on my ways of being
Session #8

**MY SUPER-POWER:**
COPING WITH CHALLENGES

**Affirmation:** I AM WORTHY OF RESPECT AND INCLUSION

**Skill:** I am able to identify and cope with microaggressions

**Practice:** Recognizing microaggressions and exercising options

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Session #16

**ALLIES:**
BEING THERE FOR OTHERS

**Affirmation:** WE ARE ALL ALLIES IN DIFFERENT WAYS

**Skill:** I can name 2 strategies for supporting a friend

**Practice:** Listening to and working with others

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Revised Session Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “I got to share my opinions”</td>
<td>- “I felt like I offended some people which made me feel really bad”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>“A lot of participation”</em></td>
<td><em>“I got stressed out and made a fool of myself”</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>“Hands on type of stuff”</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening to Others</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “Hearing everyone’s thoughts and opinions”</td>
<td>- “Should be more inclusive of races (POC) / spiritualities (2 spirit) / religions, etc.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>“Helps group develop a agreed understanding”</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “Reminded me of forgotten info”</td>
<td>- “Needs more discussion on what the terms mean / what terms weren’t included”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>“Learned more”</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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### Revised Session Feedback

**SESSION 4: MY JOURNEY: Coming Out**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Navigating Coming Out</strong></td>
<td><strong>Triggering</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Tips for coming out safely”</td>
<td>• “Can be triggering”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Helps people with coming out”</td>
<td>• “Ran out of time to finish activity”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “You don’t need to come out”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussing and Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Talk about opinions and issues on coming out”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Helps people understand other reasons to come out/not come out”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Learn about each other”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Revised Session Feedback

**SESSION 7: I BELONG: Communities and Connect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing and Listening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Belonging</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Sharing”</td>
<td>• “Felt a bit disconnected (not really because of the session)”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Hearing other’s opinions”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Spoke about some communities I am involved in”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Useful</strong></td>
<td><strong>Navigating Unsupportive Families</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “It was useful”</td>
<td>• “Need ‘straight’ communities for queer kids to tell their parents they’re going to”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Good resources to give out”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Good advice on how to interact”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “People get a broader understanding of community and find where they ‘belong’”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Learn how to navigate communities”</td>
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</table>

### Revised Session Feedback

**SESSION 8: MY SUPER-POWER: Coping with Challenges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Useful</strong></td>
<td><strong>Representation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Good tips on how to deal with microaggression”</td>
<td>• “Still narrow with identities”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Helps people face their problems”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Relatable topics”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fun</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Big book of LGBTQ+ (crushing microaggressions)”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Superpowers”</td>
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Implications for Practice

- Training of Program Facilitators
- Site for Program
- Student Voice
- Affirmative