

# **SESSION 3: COMING-OUT TO MYSELF**

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. Participants will understand that the phases they are experiencing in coming to terms with their gay and lesbian orientations are typical and need not be feared.
2. Participants will improve their ability to identify the harm that can come to their views of themselves from denying their gay and lesbian orientations.
3. Participants will improve their skills in resolving confusion over inaccurate information, feelings, adult reactions, rejection, and both myths and stereotypes.
4. Participants will identify for themselves culturally defined gender roles.
5. Participants will identify and present their reasons for being proud to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

## **RATIONALE**

Adolescence is a time of experimentation when developmental tasks are faced. One such task relates to trying out social roles. Another task involves learning social skills. Others deal with sexuality and identity. Coming to terms with sexual orientation through discovery and acceptance is among the more important objectives to be achieved during this period.

Because emerging feelings toward the same-sex are often startling and troublesome—going against conventional norms—gay and lesbian youth experience additional kinds of stress and confusion than that experienced by straight youngsters. The stigma associated with homosexuality prevents clarifying and resolving many critical issues. First, the methods for problem solving available to other teenagers are not there for gay and lesbian teenagers. Models are missing. While heterosexual youths talk to parents, other adults, and peers, open exploration of sexual orientation questions with family and friends is simply not feasible for gay and lesbian adolescents.

Second, not being able to talk to parents, other adults or peers and having difficulty admitting their orientation to themselves, these youths become isolated. This isolation plus the stigmatized attitudes and pictures of gays and lesbians which are available often leads to relying on stereotyping and misinformation. Believing the negative images of gays and lesbians results in low self-esteem, shame and self-hatred.

This training session is designed to provide a limited opportunity to work on the confusion surrounding gay and lesbian identity in adolescence. Next the session is designed to enable these young people to feel more comfortable accepting their sexual orientation and to develop a sense of pride. Without working through these issues involved with sexual orientation, instruction in safer sex is difficult and often perceived as tangential to their concerns and priorities.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Introduction of group members and the topic of the day.
2. Check Feeling Thermometers.

3. Review of successes that occurred between sessions.
4. Giving out tokens.
5. Use of a script and discussion to recognize the natural steps of denial, rejection, and depression when initially confronted with recognizing one is gay or lesbian.
6. Use of two role plays to explore the damage one can do oneself from denying one's sexual orientation and share what happened when recognition of one's orientation first took place.
7. Reduce confusion over misinformation, false expectations, and stereotypes through practice cards which place the participant in the position of correcting mistaken views.
8. Discover culturally defined gender role characteristics through small group work and role play issues.
9. Gain pleasure in self-acceptance as each participant goes through the ritual of standing before the group and indicating why he/she is proud of his/her identity and then receiving a certificate.

### **MATERIALS**

Tokens  
 Feeling Thermometers  
 Scripts of Jack and Lefty  
 Maria and Grace (Instruction Card)  
 Jenny and Gail (Instruction Card)  
 Ted and Abe  
 Practice cards on Confusion  
 Form: Masculine and Feminine Behavior  
 Pencils  
 Blank Cards  
 Certificates

### **Exercise 1: Introducing Each Other and the Session**

GROUP LEADER SAYS

Welcome back. Today's session is about coming-out to ourselves.

We are going to practice acknowledging our sexual orientation and handling how we feel about knowing we are gay or lesbian.

Before we go any further I want to know how you would complete this sentence: "I like being gay or lesbian because....."

Please get into a group for the men and one for the women.

DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO A GAY GROUP AND A LESBIAN GROUP.

Take three minutes and brain storm a list of answers to that question "I like being gay or lesbian because ...."

For example, you might say, "because I have so many caring friends."

ALLOW THREE MINUTES AND ASK FOR THEIR LISTS.

What did you come up with?

OBTAIN IDEAS. OTHER LISTS HAVE CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING:  
BECAUSE MY FRIENDS ARE CREATIVE  
GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE ARE NICE TO ME  
I AM A TRUE ORIGINAL  
I CAN BE EXPRESSIVE  
IT MAKES ME STRONGER  
I CAN BE TRUE TO MYSELF  
KNOW HOW TO BE OPEN-MINDED  
MY FRIENDS ARE MORE SENSITIVE  
I JUST FEEL FREER  
WE GAYS AND LESBIANS ARE LEADERS  
WE STICK TOGETHER AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER

That's a wonderful list.

Feeling good about being gay or lesbian is really important.

Speaking of "feeling," how do you feel now on the Feeling Thermometer?

OBTAIN READINGS.

First, I want to make sure everyone knows who is in the group.

As we go around, please tell us your first name and tells us about a time you did something really brave.

It could be many things: overcoming a fear, speaking out, saying "no" to drugs, confronting someone, telling someone a personal secret, opening up to another person, leaving a bad scene, admitting you were wrong, trying something again and again, helping someone when other people looked down on you for doing it, meeting a new person and so on.

To give you an idea of what I mean I'll go first.

I'm your group leader, and my name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I did something brave when I \_\_\_\_\_. (GIVE A REAL EXAMPLE.)

HAVE EACH PERSON GIVE HIS/HER NAME AND A TIME WHEN SHE/HE DID SOMETHING BRAVE. IF SOMEONE HAS TROUBLE THINKING OF AN INCIDENT, HELP THEM DISCOVER A TIME OF BRAVERY. LIKE JUST COMING TO THIS SESSION MAY BE A BRAVE ACT FOR A TEENAGER. HAVE THE CO-GROUP LEADER GO LAST.

Here are some tokens for you to pass out to other group members during this session.

Every time you appreciate any act of another person or feel positive toward them or even simply like their being here, give them a token.

PASS OUT TOKENS TO GROUP MEMBERS.

Now let's take a few minutes and tell us what you did between sessions that kept you away from the HIV virus or that made your life a little bit better.

GO AROUND AND HEAR REPORTS. GIVE OUT TOKENS.

Those reports were really great!

What about the homework?

You were to try concentrating on a simple task—like washing your face, brushing your teeth?

Could you really focus on the task—get into it so much that you forgot yourself at that moment?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES AND DISCUSS.

As I said earlier, today we'll deal with coming-out to oneself.

As you know, the goal of all these sessions is to help you reduce your exposure to HIV.

If you already are HIV positive, then the goal is to help you live a high quality life and for you to learn how to keep from spreading the virus around.

But, we don't think it is very easy to learn about HIV/AIDS without first exploring what it means to be a gay or lesbian teenager.

In this session, we'll work on coming-out to yourself, and in the next session coming to other people will be the topic.

### **Exercise 2: What's Wrong With Me?**

When a person is going through a deep struggle within himself or herself, it is easy to feel all alone.

It is also easy to think that "there must be something wrong with me."

It is easy to think you are really different.

Those thoughts and feelings are magnified for the young person recognizing that he is gay or that she is a lesbian.

Society's lack of acceptance makes things more confusing.

This little script will help illustrate what I mean.

Who will read Jack and who will read Lefty?

SELECT VOLUNTEERS AND GIVE THEM THE SCRIPTS.

#### **Jack and Lefty**

LEFTY: I want to ask you something.

JACK:           What's that?

LEFTY: Are you queer?

JACK:           Man! You think I'm crazy.

LEFTY: No buggin. Just answer me. Are you?

JACK: Hell, no! Why you ask?

LEFTY: I don't see you going out. You never try to put a move on a girl. You don't talk about sex. There's no pictures of women in your room.

JACK: Give me a break! I'm no faggot. I hate faggots. If some queer came up to me, I'd beat him up.

LEFTY: You really hate them?

JACK: You better believe it.

LEFTY: You'd beat them up?

JACK: Damn right.

LEFTY: You'd beat me up?

JACK: You're no queer.

LEFTY: You like me?

JACK: What is this?

LEFTY: Just answer me—do you like me?

JACK: Course I do—not like a queer though.

LEFTY: I know you, Jack. Don't hide from me. I've been watching you for a year, Jack. When you going to admit it? I'm gay. When you going to say, you're gay?

JACK: No, no, no!

LEFTY: Don't be all upset. Be happy you can finally talk to somebody.

JACK: I wish I were dead.

LEFTY: Man, don't be stupid.

JACK: I don't want to be gay!

THE END

Jack and Lefty are casual friends.

They met in high school and have known each other for several years.

Before we begin reading the script, I want to give each person who is observing something specific to look for.

ASSIGN EACH PARTICIPANT A DIFFERENT TASK.

You observe their ..... facial expressions  
voice tone  
posture

words  
gestures  
voice level  
eye contact

OK, now let's read the script.

HAVE THE VOLUNTEERS READ THE SCRIPT.

Thank you. That was great!

GIVE OUT TOKENS TO THE ACTORS.

Let's hear what people observed.

OBTAIN RESPONSES. LOOK FOR DENIAL, TURNING AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY, AND FEELING VULNERABLE IN JACK. VULNERABILITY IS SEEN IN FEELING BAD ABOUT ONESELF AND FEELING EASILY HURT. LOOK FOR SUPPORT AND CONCERN FROM LEFTY. GIVE OUT TOKENS.

So, Jack was obviously distressed about having Lefty suggest that he was gay, and what did he do to deal with it?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

That's right: first he denied it.

Then he rejects gayness and takes on some of the hatred of the dominant society.

Feelings of depression and wanting to harm himself come out at the end.

Was Jack crazy or unusual in responding as he did?

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

While there are many gay males and lesbian women who feel good about themselves, most have felt distressed at some point during the coming-out process.

Lesbian and gay people are gaining their rights, but society is far from being tolerant and accepting.

With the world around us considering being gay or lesbian a crime, a sin, or sign of mental illness, it is not surprising that someone would go through the stages we saw here:

- denial of feelings;
- rejecting people who are gay or lesbian, and
- feeling depressed and suicidal.

The point is that these are normal responses—not something off the wall.

Society has the problem, not gay and lesbian youth.

There is nothing wrong with having these reactions during the self-discovery part of coming-out.

How are you feeling now on the Feeling Thermometer?

OBTAIN FEELING THERMOMETER READINGS.

### **Exercise 3: "I Don't Want To Be Gay or Lesbian."**

During the struggle of coming-out some gay and lesbian youth want to forget who they are or want to be heterosexual.

Let's see how we would deal with that situation through a role play.

Who will be Maria and who will be Grace?

SELECT VOLUNTEERS.

You two are friends.

Grace wants to forget—to erase from her mind—that she is a lesbian.

Grace, what is your goal?

HAVE GRACE STATE WHAT HER GOAL IS AND HELP HER BE CLEAR IF SHE IS OFF.

Maria, your goal is to convince Grace that "forgetting" it might not be very helpful in the long run.

So, Maria, what is your goal?

HAVE MARIA STATE HER GOAL—TO CONVINCING GRACE THAT TRYING TO CHANGE WHO SHE IS HAS NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES AND HELP HER BECOME CLEAR IF SHE IS OFF TARGET.

Maria, I am going to give you a card with a few ideas on it.

GIVE MARIA THE "INSTRUCTION CARD."

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR MARIA**

YOUR TASK IS TO CONVINCING GRACE THAT TRYING TO FORGET WHO SHE IS CAN END UP DOING HER NO GOOD.

SOME POSSIBLE IDEAS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. CUTTING OFF PART OF YOUR SELF WILL LEAVE YOU WITH A DAMAGED SELF—ONLY PART OF YOU WILL EXIST.
2. GIVEN THAT YOU CAN NOT CHANGE WHO YOU ARE, YOU WILL END UP FRUSTRATED BY TRYING TO MAKE THE CHANGE.
3. YOU ARE GONG TO END UP CONVINCING YOURSELF THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG OR HATEFUL ABOUT BEING A LESBIAN.

ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS. USE ANY IDEAS THAT YOU WANT.

Maria, feel free to use your own ideas.

You don't have to follow what is on the card.

The rest of you will be observers.

Each person gets a specific task.

GIVE EACH PERSON SOMETHING TO FOCUS ON.

You observe their ..... facial expressions  
voice tone  
posture  
words  
gestures  
voice level  
eye contact

OK, let's get started with the role play.

ALLOW THE ROLE PLAY TO GO FOR A FEW MINUTES.

Thanks. That was really good.

GIVE OUT TOKENS.

Grace, where were you on the Feeling Thermometer during the role play?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Also, Grace, what did you do that you liked and what would you do differently?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Maria, where were you on the Feeling Thermometer during the role play?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Maria, what did you do that you liked and what one thing would you do differently?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Now let's hear from the observers.

Tell us what you observed, what you liked, and what one thing you would have done differently if you had been playing the role.

OBTAIN FEEDBACK FROM THE OBSERVERS. LOOK FOR INCREASING SELF-HATRED, ENDING UP IN THE WRONG CROWD OF PEOPLE, STILL HAVING TO DEAL WITH ONE'S TRUE FEELINGS, AND BEING SO INVOLVED WITH DENIAL THAT A LOT OF FUN IN LIFE IS MISSED. ALSO GIVE OUT TOKENS.

Are there any other arguments that you would have used if you were Maria?

OBTAIN RESPONSES.

Now let's do one more role play.

Who will be Jenny and who will play Gail?

SELECT VOLUNTEERS.

Jenny, you are a lesbian and your task is to explain to Gail why it is best for you to act as if you were heterosexual.

Tell us what your goal is, Jenny.

HAVE JENNY STATE THAT HER GOAL IS TO CONVINCING GAIL THAT ACTING AS IF SHE WERE STRAIGHT IS THE BEST THING FOR HER (JENNY) TO DO.

Gail, your task is to point out to Jenny why pretending she is heterosexual might not be a good idea.

What is your goal, Gail?

HAVE GAIL EXPLAIN THAT HER GOAL IS TO TELL JENNY WHY ACTING LIKE A HETEROSEXUAL IS NOT A GOOD IDEA.

Gail, here are some ideas that you might want to use.

GIVE OUT AN "INSTRUCTION CARD" TO GAIL.

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR GAIL

YOUR TASK IS TO CONVINCING JENNY THAT HER PLAN TO ACT LIKE SHE IS HETEROSEXUAL MIGHT HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON HER.

YOU MAY WANT TO:

1. ASK HER IF SHE THINKS IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE A LESBIAN AND STILL THINK OF HERSELF AS A WOMAN AND MEET MANY OF THE EXPECTATIONS THAT SOCIETY HAS OF WOMEN.
2. HELP HER THINK THROUGH WHAT CHANGES SHE EXPECTS IN HER LIFE-STYLE FROM "ACTING HETEROSEXUAL" AND SEE IF THEY ARE REALLY GOING TO HAPPEN.
3. HELP HER SEE WHO IS PUTTING PRESSURE ON HER AND THINK OF WAYS TO DEAL WITH THEM.
4. HELP HER THINK THROUGH WHAT SHE EXPECTS FROM BEING A LESBIAN AND SEE IF THERE ANY MYTHS PRESENT.
5. MAKE SURE THAT SHE IS NOT BLAMING BEING LESBIAN FOR ALL THE UNPLEASANT THINGS IN HER LIFE.

USE ANY IDEAS THAT YOU WANT. MAKE SURE YOUR IDEAS ARE INCLUDED.

Gail, feel free to use your own ideas.

You don't have to follow what is on the card.

The rest of you will be observers.

Each person gets a specific task.

GIVE EACH PERSON SOMETHING TO FOCUS ON.

You observe their ..... facial expressions  
voice tone  
posture  
words  
gestures  
voice level  
eye contact

OK, let's get started with the role play.

ALLOW THE ROLE PLAY TO GO FOR A FEW MINUTES.

Thanks. That was really good.

GIVE OUT TOKENS.

Jenny, where were you on the Feeling Thermometer during the role play?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Also, Jenny, what did you do that you liked and what one thing would you do differently?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Gail, where were you on the Feeling Thermometer during the role play?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Gail, what did you do that you liked and what one aspect would you do differently?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Now let's hear from the observers.

Tell us what you observed, what you liked, and one thing you would have done differently if you had been playing the role.

OBTAIN FEEDBACK FROM THE OBSERVERS. LOOK FOR ASSUMING ALL PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED IF ONE IS HETEROSEXUAL AND DEALING WITH STEREOTYPES OF LESBIANS. ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF GENDER ROLES. HOW ARE MEN AS MEN SUPPOSED TO BEHAVE, AND HOW ARE WOMEN AS WOMEN SUPPOSED TO BEHAVE— ALSO GIVE OUT TOKENS.

Are there any other arguments that you would have used if you were Maria?

OBTAIN RESPONSES.

Think of the day on which you came to the conclusion that you were gay, lesbian or bi-sexual.

Where were you?

What did you have on?

Who were you with?

How old were you?

What time of day was it?

What did you say to yourself?

What did you do?

Think a few minutes about that day.

ALLOW A FEW MINUTES FOR REMEMBERING. THEN DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO PAIRS.

Now describe that day to your partner.

ALLOW A FEW MINUTES FOR SHARING.

How do you feel on the Feeling Thermometer?

OBTAIN READINGS.

How did the remembering and sharing go?

OBTAIN REACTIONS AND DISCUSS WHAT WAS POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ABOUT COMING-OUT TO YOURSELF.

#### **Exercise 4: Clearing Up Confusion**

Often times coming-out to oneself is made harder by confusion over the facts of gay and lesbian development, ways of behaving, feelings, and sexual experiences.

To get at some of the confusion and clear it up we are going to use the practice cards.

You will receive a card, and at the top it tells you to pass the card to a certain person.

Pass the card, and the person who gets it will read you a statement.

Then you indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statement and tell us why.

We will then ask the other group members for their opinions.

PASS OUT THE CARDS ONE AT A TIME. AFTER A RESPONSE HAS BEEN MADE TO A CARD, ASK THE GROUP'S OPINION AND DISCUSS IT. FOCUS ON MISINFORMATION AND FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONFUSION AROUND EMERGING HOMOSEXUAL FEELINGS. SUCH FACTORS MAY INCLUDE MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES, INABILITY TO LABEL FEELINGS, ADULTS DISMISSING FEELINGS, CONFLICTS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY, ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING THE ORIGINS OF HOMOSEXUALITY, AND NORMATIVE BEHAVIORS.

#### **CONFUSION CARDS**

CARD 1, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES CHINESE FOOD

"I'M A VERY MACHO ATHLETE, AND I FEEL ATTRACTED TO OTHER GUYS. BUT GAYS ARE SWISHY. I'M NOT. SO I CAN'T BE GAY."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 2, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES ITALIAN FOOD

"I CAN'T DESCRIBE MY SEXUAL FEELINGS FOR ANOTHER GIRL. THEY DON'T SOUND ANYTHING LIKE WHAT STRAIGHT GIRLS TALK ABOUT WHEN THEY WERE SEXUALLY AROUSED. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 3, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES KOREAN FOOD

"MY NAME IS CLAUDE, AND I REALLY LIKE EDWARD. BUT TO SAY I'M "FALLING IN LOVE" SOUNDS WEIRD. I GUESS GAYS CAN'T HAVE THE SAME FEELINGS AS STRAIGHTS DO."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 4, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES GREEK FOOD

"I'M A VERY PRETTY AND FEMININE FIFTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL, AND I FEEL SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO OTHER GIRLS. BUT I HATE TO DRESS LIKE A MAN OR ACT AGGRESSIVE, SO I CAN'T BE A LESBIAN—CAN I?"

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 5, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES SOUL FOOD

"WHEN I WAS 14, I TOLD MY MOM THAT OTHER BOYS TURNED ME ON. SHE SAID IT WAS JUST A PHASE. I WOULD GROW OUT OF IT. I'M 17 NOW. NOT TO WORRY. NEXT YEAR SHOULD BE THE LAST YEAR OF THIS PHASE."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 6, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES LEBANESE FOOD

"MY NAME IS KEVIN, AND I REALLY WANT THIS BOY IN MY ENGLISH CLASS. IF I APPROACH HIM, HE WILL REJECT ME AND TELL OTHERS. I GUESS I CAN'T WANT HIM THAT MUCH AFTER ALL."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 7, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES YANKEE FOOD

"THERE'S A GIRL IN MY GRADE WHOM EVERY ONE CALLS A LEZZIE. KIDS ARE MEAN TO HER. I THINK SHE'S EXCITING, BUT IF I GOT TO KNOW HER, THEY'D BE CRUEL TO ME TOO. IT'S CONFUSING TO THINK THAT LOVE WILL BRING HATRED."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 8, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES CAJUN FOOD

"WHEN I WAS A KID, THIS FRIEND OF THE FAMILY MADE ME TAKE HIS PENIS IN MY MOUTH. THAT'S WHY I'M GAY."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 9, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES BARBECUES

"THIS OLDER LESBIAN SEDUCED ME WHEN I WAS ELEVEN. I GOT SO AROUSED. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. SHE MUST HAVE SENSED SOMETHING ABOUT ME I DIDN'T KNOW. AFTER THAT I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO BECOME A LESBIAN."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 10, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES MEXICAN FOOD

"I TOLD MY DAD I THOUGHT I WAS GAY. HE SAID ALL MEN THINK ABOUT OTHER MEN'S PENISES. THEY JUST DON'T SUCK THEM. HE TOLD ME TO GO TO A PROSTITUTE. I DIDN'T LIKE HER, BUT I'LL TRY IT AGAIN NEXT YEAR."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 11, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES JAPANESE FOOD

"I'VE HAD SEX WITH ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE GIRLS IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS. THERE AREN'T TOO MANY MORE GIRLS LEFT IN MY HIGH SCHOOL WHO WILL DO IT. I GUESS THAT SHOULD FIX ANYONE WHO THINKS THAT I'M GAY."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 12, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES INDIAN FOOD

"I CAN HAVE AN ORGASM WITH A GUY OR ANOTHER GIRL. I LIKE SEX. THAT'S ALL. IF THEY HAVE THE RIGHT MOVES, WHO IS HAVING SEX WITH ME DOESN'T MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE. SO THAT MUST MAKE ME SOME KIND OF FREAK."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

Quickly tell me how your Feeling Thermometer levels would read right now?

OBTAIN READINGS AND IN WHAT WAY THE READINGS RELATE TO THE CARDS AND SITUATIONS.

So, if you had to summarize it, what is a positive message to give yourself when this kind of confusion comes up?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. LOOK FOR HELPFUL AND POSITIVE SELF-TALK.

Thank you for your responses and contributions.

Are there areas of confusion that we have not touched upon?

ENCOURAGE A RESPONSE AND DISCUSS.

### **Exercise 5: Identifying Gender Roles**

Now I want you to consider how men and women typically behave.

In your society, what is considered masculine and what is considered feminine?

We know that these definitions change depending on the culture you come from.

Let's go over the form I want you to fill out in small groups.

HAND OUT THE "MASCULINE AND FEMININE BEHAVIOR" FORM AND GO OVER IT.

### **MASCULINE AND FEMININE BEHAVIOR**

1. LIST THE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE TYPICAL MASCULINE AND FEMININE BEHAVIOR THAT IS ACCEPTED IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

MASCULINE (BUTCH)

FEMININE (FEM)

2. LIST THE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE HOW MEN AND WOMEN BEHAVE IN DEEP, INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS.

MEN

WOMEN

3. LIST THE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE HOW MEN AND WOMEN BEHAVE SEXUALLY.

MEN

WOMEN

THE END

BREAK THE LARGE GROUP INTO TEAMS OF THREE PEOPLE. IF IT IS POSSIBLE, CREATE CULTURALLY HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING—BLACKS TOGETHER, LATINOS TOGETHER, ETC.

Go ahead and take about 10 minutes to fill this out.

ALLOW TEN MINUTES AND THEN HAVE THE GROUPS REPORT ON THEIR LISTS. LOOK FOR CULTURAL DIFFERENCES. DISCUSS THESE DIFFERENCES AS THEY AFFECT HOW A GAY OR LESBIAN PERSON FEELS IN THAT ENVIRONMENT.

That was great.

I want two volunteers to read this scene.

The script starts with giving you lines, but then you have to keep going on your own, making up the lines.

Who will play Ted and who will play Abe?

SELECT VOLUNTEERS AND GIVE OUT THE SCRIPTS.

Ted and Abe

TED: This will be our first weekend together. I'm so excited.

ABE: Me, too. I got tickets to a play for tonight.

TED: Really! I got us tickets for a new dance group for tonight.

ABE: I'm used to being the one who gets tickets.

TED: Me too. Well, I'll cook. I'm a good chef.

ABE: Look, usually I'm the chef. You do the dishes.

TED: Men don't do dishes.

ABE: When we get in bed, it won't matter.

TED: I'll let you know when I'm ready.

ABE: I'm used to being the one who starts it.

TED: Well, at least this is definite: I'm a top.

ABE: You can't be because I have always been the top.

TED: (KEEP GOING. TRY TO RESOLVE THIS ON YOUR OWN.)

ABE: (KEEP GOING. TRY TO RESOLVE THIS ON YOUR OWN.)

THE END

While you two read the parts, the rest of the group will be observers.

When the role play is over, you can give some feedback.

ASSIGN OBSERVER ROLES.

You observe their ..... facial expressions

voice tone

posture

words

gestures

voice level

eye contact

HAVE THEM START READING THE SCRIPT.

That was great!

GIVE OUT TOKENS.

Ted, where were you on the Feeling Thermometer during the role play?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Also, Ted, what did you do that you liked and what one thing would you do differently?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Abe, where were you on the Feeling Thermometer during the role play?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Abe, what did you do that you liked and what one aspect would you do differently?

OBTAIN A RESPONSE.

Now let's hear from the observers.

Tell us what you observed, what you liked, and one thing you would have done differently if you had been playing the role.

Also, focus on ways that men are supposed to act that showed up here.

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

Can you see how the ways in which males and females are supposed to behave is a different issue than whether you like someone of the same-sex?

You can fit the masculine stereotype and be gay or the feminine stereotype and be a lesbian.

Roles within a relationship can be negotiated as well.

Nowadays, male and female roles are changing in ways that may seem confusing.

Fathers get maternity leave and stay home to take care of their children.

Women are top executives.

Gay and lesbian couples adopt children.

A lesbian partner is given guardianship over her comatose lover.

Yes, there are stereotypes you have to deal with, but you can decide how much you want to buy into them.

### **Exercise 6: Accepting Oneself**

In closing this session each person will receive a certificate for being who he or she is.

All you have to do to receive your certificate is to stand up and tell us why you are proud to be who you are.

Remember at the beginning of today's session you came up with a list of why it is an advantage to be gay or lesbian.

Let's take a look at that list again.

GO OVER THE LIST OF ADVANTAGES.

First, I am going to pass out a blank card and pencil to everyone.

The card is for your notes.

Write what you plan to say to us on the card.

You have five minutes to make your notes on what you plan to say.

PASS OUT CARDS AND PENCILS. ALLOW FIVE MINUTES. CREATE A SEMI-CIRCLE. EACH SPEAKER WILL COME TO THE OPENING IN THE SEMI-CIRCLE AS THE GROUP LEADER CALLS HIS/HER NAME. AFTER THE PERSON HAS MADE THEIR REMARKS, READ THE CERTIFICATE AND GIVE IT TO HER/HIM.

CERTIFICATE

THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED TO

\_\_\_\_\_  
FOR BEING WHO SHE (HE) IS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

When I call your name, please come to the opening in the semi-circle and speak to us about why you are proud to be who you are.

Then, I will give you your certificate.

BEGIN THE PROCESS AND APPLAUD AFTER EACH PERSON HAS RECEIVED THE CERTIFICATE.

Thank you. Your speeches were wonderful.

For homework, discuss why it is great to be gay or lesbian with a gay or lesbian friend.

Before we end today's session, I would like to know how your Feeling Thermometer readings are.

OBTAIN RESPONSES.

Finally, take a few minutes and express appreciation to each person for their contributions and presence today.

ENCOURAGE GIVING STROKES TO EVERYONE.

I will see you next time at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

END OF SESSION 3

CONFUSION CARDS

CARD 1, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES CHINESE FOOD

"I'M A VERY MACHO ATHLETE, AND I FEEL ATTRACTED TO OTHER GUYS. BUT GAYS ARE SWISHY. I'M NOT. SO I CAN'T BE GAY."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 2, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES ITALIAN FOOD

"I CAN'T DESCRIBE MY SEXUAL FEELINGS FOR ANOTHER GIRL. THEY DON'T SOUND ANYTHING LIKE WHAT STRAIGHT GIRLS TALK ABOUT WHEN THEY WERE SEXUALLY AROUSED. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 3, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES KOREAN FOOD

"MY NAME IS CLAUDE, AND I REALLY LIKE EDWARD. BUT TO SAY I'M "FALLING IN LOVE" SOUNDS WEIRD. I GUESS GAYS CAN'T HAVE THE SAME FEELINGS AS STRAIGHTS DO."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 4, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES GREEK FOOD

"I'M A VERY PRETTY AND FEMININE FIFTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL, AND I FEEL SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO OTHER GIRLS. BUT I HATE TO DRESS LIKE A MAN OR ACT AGGRESSIVE, SO I CAN'T BE A LESBIAN—CAN I?"

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 5, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES SOUL FOOD

"WHEN I WAS 14, I TOLD MY MOM THAT OTHER BOYS TURNED ME ON. SHE SAID IT WAS JUST A PHASE. I WOULD GROW OUT OF IT. I'M 17 NOW. NOT TO WORRY. NEXT YEAR SHOULD BE THE LAST YEAR OF THIS PHASE."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 6, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES LEBANESE FOOD

"MY NAME IS KEVIN, AND I REALLY WANT THIS BOY IN MY ENGLISH CLASS. IF I APPROACH HIM, HE WILL REJECT ME AND TELL OTHERS. I GUESS I CAN'T WANT HIM THAT MUCH AFTER ALL."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 7, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES YANKEE FOOD

"THERE'S A GIRL IN MY GRADE WHOM EVERY ONE CALLS A LEZZIE. KIDS ARE MEAN TO HER. I THINK SHE'S EXCITING, BUT IF I GOT TO KNOW HER, THEY'D BE CRUEL TO ME TOO. IT'S CONFUSING TO THINK THAT LOVE WILL BRING HATRED."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 8, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES CAJUN FOOD

"WHEN I WAS A KID, THIS FRIEND OF THE FAMILY MADE ME TAKE HIS PENIS IN MY MOUTH. THAT'S WHY I'M GAY."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 9, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES BARBECUES

"THIS OLDER LESBIAN SEDUCED ME WHEN I WAS ELEVEN. I GOT SO AROUSED. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. SHE MUST HAVE SENSED SOMETHING ABOUT ME I DIDN'T KNOW. AFTER THAT I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO BECOME A LESBIAN."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 10, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES MEXICAN FOOD

"I TOLD MY DAD I THOUGHT I WAS GAY. HE SAID ALL MEN THINK ABOUT OTHER MEN'S PENISES. THEY JUST DON'T SUCK THEM. HE TOLD ME TO GO TO A PROSTITUTE. I DIDN'T LIKE HER, BUT I'LL TRY IT AGAIN NEXT YEAR."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 11, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES JAPANESE FOOD

"I'VE HAD SEX WITH ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE GIRLS IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS. THERE AREN'T TOO MANY MORE GIRLS LEFT IN MY HIGH SCHOOL WHO WILL DO IT. I GUESS THAT SHOULD FIX ANYONE WHO THINKS THAT I'M GAY."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?

CARD 12, S, CONFUSION

PASS TO THE PERSON WHO LIKES INDIAN FOOD

"I CAN HAVE AN ORGASM WITH A GUY OR ANOTHER GIRL. I LIKE SEX. THAT'S ALL. IF THEY HAVE THE RIGHT MOVES, WHO IS HAVING SEX WITH ME DOESN'T MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE. SO THAT MUST MAKE ME SOME KIND OF FREAK."

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE WAY THIS PERSON IS THINKING AND WHY?