

SPECTRUM

recognizing a spectrum of identities



Overview Of The Program

We are hoping to attract and provide safe-space housing for students who identify with and are interested in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, pansexual, polyamorous, questioning, queer, and ally community (no limitations may apply). An open-minded environment will immediately be established in order to open the door for teaching identity as a spectrum. This means that SPECTRUM as a program will teach the history and modern perception of sexual and gender orientation. As a team we will use knowledge obtained and shared personal experiences to break down stereotypes, thereby preventing bias incidents. Acceptance includes all identities including ally and opposing ideas. Not all understand the spectrum of lifestyles we will be exploring. We will teach members to respect all opinions, including those of solid “traditional family” ideals.

Some history will be explored throughout the year. This will include, but is not limited to, various gay and anti-gay rights milestones such as the Stonewall Rebellion, rights leaders, the “ex-gay” movement, current and past policies affecting queer-identified individuals, and current and past attitudes toward the spectrum of lifestyles.

This program is important because LGBT issues are nearly impossible to teach freely and completely in a classroom or club. The emotional and political nature of the issues explored makes the situation very delicate which is why the safespace housing is required. Many issues seem taboo which corner students to refer to personal experiences with the cautious stem of “My friend...” rather than “I once...” in a classroom setting. A learning environment with developed trust, camaraderie, and acceptance is beyond priceless. It is the best and most valuable opportunity we can offer to any student.

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective 1

Each member will be able to define and reinforce an accepting safe space environment. They will be able to facilitate safe spaces and lead by example in areas outside of the structured program.

Action Steps

A) Members will participate in creating an “Equality Flag.” This is made by randomly assigning one color of the rainbow to each program member. They will be given strips of paper to decorate with the themes being their color, ideal acceptance, ideal equality, and personal experience. Each member will present their “color strip” and explain the themes of the piece. Afterwards, all of the strips will be connected to form one unified “Equality Flag.” All program members will then discuss the similarities and differences of the themes as well as the symbolism of the unified flag. This activity is meant as an ice-breaker as well as a bonding activity. It is very important for building the accepting learning environment that SPECTRUM stands for. **(First 2 weeks of September)**

{This activity should be free of cost assuming that we can obtain one large strip of paper from the RA supply closet}

B) During the first meeting of the year, members will write their definition and expectations of safe space on index cards and place them in a bowl. These thoughts will be read aloud in a fashion that will keep each author 100% anonymous. This will give everyone a good idea of our starting point and help us to set goals. **(First meeting of the year)**

C) During each discussion and meeting throughout the year, we will touch on the subject of safe space and relate it to the current topic. This is necessary to reinforce the idea and to apply it to all aspects of life. Members will be expected to relate previous discussions and experiences to the current topic of discussion. **(Ongoing)**

D) At the end of each semester, there will be a meeting dedicated to “Safe Space: Then, Now, and Later” where members will discuss just that. We will facilitate a discussion on what their original idea of safe space was, how that idea has changed, points that need clarification, and ways to create safe spaces in daily life. **(Ongoing)**

Learning Objective 2

Each member will be able to define the term “ally” beyond the classic definition. They will be able to identify as allies to several identities separate from their own.

For example: Anne is a lesbian and is an ally to gay men. Or: Erik is trans and identifies as straight. He is an ally to cis-gendered gay, lesbian, and pansexual identified individuals.

They will also learn about the historical and current treatment of allies (ally being an all-inclusive term which does not exclude any identity; anyone can be an ally as it is an attitude and way of life).

Action Steps

A) Members will be required to attend at least two LGBT-related club meetings. These include, but are not limited to, Free2Be, Linemen, Hearts Not Parts, or a one-on-one meeting with any of the LGBTQA staff at the Allen House. **(September, October, and ongoing for members who choose to do so)**

B) Members will be required to either volunteer for two hours at the Translating Identity Conference or they may attend at least one of the workshops. **(November)**

C) Members will participate in a group discussion on the definition of ally as well as their experiences being one. They will also discuss how they treat allies and how to make allies feel comfortable and welcome. **(October)**

D) Members will be required to watch the movie “Better Than Chocolate” and identify at least four different allies and four different non-allies from the movie. Members will be required to define the term “ally” and identify what makes a person a good or bad ally. As with all movie screenings, we will have questions prepared for members to answer and topics to discuss at the end of the movie. Members will be expected to relate character development to actual change in people. **(October)**

Learning Objective 3

Each member will be able to identify the difference between sex and gender. They will have a decent understanding of the definition of transgender.

Action Steps

A) Members will discuss their current understanding of transgender. **(November)**

B) A guest speaker will come in to explain transgender issues and to answer questions. **(November, before TIC)**

C) Members will be required to either volunteer for two hours at the Translating Identity Conference or they may attend at least one of the workshops. **(November)**

Learning Objective 4

Each member will be able to compare and contrast different views and attitudes of various cultures during various times toward LGBT lifestyles.

Action Steps

A) Members will watch one or more of the films: Alexander, Philadelphia, But I’m a Cheerleader, Milk, Better Than Chocolate, Birdcage, etc. As with all movie screenings, we will have questions prepared for members to answer and topics to discuss at the end of the movie. **(Ongoing)**

{ We currently own or have access to most of the movies mentioned, but would like to set aside \$40.00 for the purchase of two dvd’s. }

B) They will take turns leading discussion groups on the issues touched by the films. These issues include, but are not limited to family interactions, general acceptance or rejection by society, interactions within the LGBT community, and the effect of legal LGBT matters on family and friends. **(Ongoing)**

C) The idea of gender roles will be explored in an informal discussion after the viewing of “But I’m a Cheerleader.” For example: Mathieu wears high heels while vacuuming to feel sexy... This is not devious. Or: Giuseppe paints his toe nails purple to brighten his day... This is perfectly normal. As with all movie screenings, we will have questions prepared for members to answer and topics to discuss at the end of the movie. **(Ongoing)**

Learning Objective 5

Each member will be able to describe the effect of AIDS on the gay community from the time of its discovery to present day.

Action Steps

A) Members will watch the movie “Philadelphia” and have a discussion on the stigmas surrounding gays in relation to AIDS and other diseases. As with all movie screenings, we will have questions prepared for members to answer and topics to discuss at the end of the movie. **(January 19-24)**

B) Members will each present one court case or law which has had an effect on the LGBT community. Proposition 8 will be discussed, but only in relation to other presentations. **(January 25-31)**

C) AIDS as a current threat will be discussed. Members will be expected to have a ballpark idea of the percent of individuals, in their age range and otherwise, who are affected by AIDS. An AIDS experiment/demonstration will take place during this meeting. Members will be told to enjoy the intimacy of shaking hands, hugging, and high-fiving their program-mates. They will then be given the option to experience this human contact with polyvinyl gloves on (many people, including 50% of the people proposing this program, yes one. Are allergic to latex. We believe that polyvinyl is a safer alternative). Index cards will be placed on their seating area while they are up and touching. They will be told to sit down and look at their card. Two or three of them will find that they have AIDS. The consequences of their irresponsible hand shaking will then be discussed in detail and personal experiences will be shared. **(Pre- “Waffles After Sex” party)**

D) A safe sex presentation and activity will be held with the help and cooperation of the Center for Health and Wellbeing. This may be a trivia game, a “Waffles After Sex*” party, or another interactive group activity. This event will be open to the entire Living/Learning Community, as it is an important topic for everyone.

*Waffles After Sex implies that waffles will be served at the presentation and no group sex will take place during the event... not even before the waffles. **(First week of February)**

Learning Objective 6

Each member will be able to identify at least three people who have made a historical or inspirational difference affecting the LGBT community.

Action Steps

A) Each member will give a short presentation on one person of their choice who has made a historical or inspirational difference in the LGBT community. **(February 1-14)**

B) Members will then discuss what makes a great leader and the magnitude of representing a minority group. **(February 1-14)**

C) Discuss LGBT individuals in sports, the military, the police force, etc. **(February 1-14)**

Learning Objective 7

Each member will be able to identify at least three people or characters that have made a difference in the LGBT literary community.

Action Steps

A) Members will give a short presentation on a character or author of their choice. The character/author must have made a difference in the life of the presenter or the life of others. Some form of LGBT-related issues must be included. For example: Mathieu Messier presents the book “Rainbow Boys” because it helped him through the difficult coming out process. Or: Anne Sinisi presents Oscar Wilde because she is inspired by his tenacity and fearless way of living. **(February-March)**

Community Service

In cooperation with the Center for Health and Wellbeing, we will hold a safer-sex presentation which will be open to the entire Living & Learning community. Facts about health, wellness, and communicable diseases will be explored. This event will be friendly to people of all identities and sexual orientation.

Members of SPECTRUM will be required to participate in the Translating Identity Conference. Program members will have a choice of either attending at least one workshop at the event or volunteering for at least two hours. In order to lead by example, SPECTRUM program directors will be expected to do both.

Plans For Interactions With Other L/L Programs

We would like to do health and wellness presentations with other programs based on health and wellness. We would also like to work in cooperation with “No Boundaries: Redefining Culture” to hold activities based on breaking down the gender binary, preventing bias incidents, and breaking down stigmas and stereotypes.