



# Healthy Relationships Program *for LGBT2Q+ Youth*

## About HRP for LGBT2Q+ Youth

The Healthy Relationships Program (HRP) for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two-Spirit, Queering/Questioning (LGBT2Q+) Youth is a small groups positive mental health promotion program for gender, sexual, and romantic minority youth.

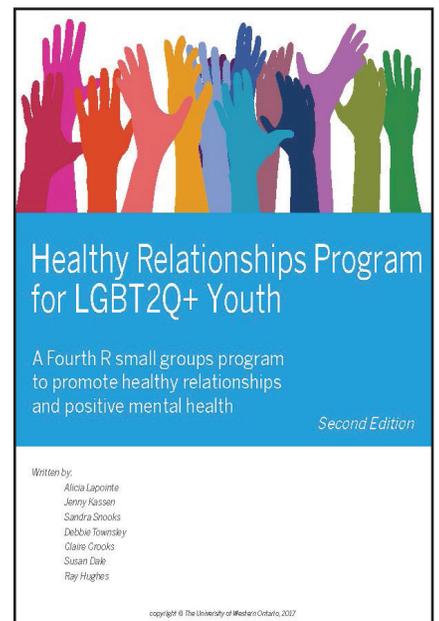
This program includes 18 sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. It may be delivered in Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA) or LGBT2Q+ youth group settings.

The HRP for LGBT2Q+ Youth helps build resiliency and promote well-being among LGBT2Q+ youth. It affirms, validates, and celebrates sexual and gender diversity, cultivates a caring and supportive community, and helps LGBT2Q+ youth develop skills and strategies that promote healthy relationships.

This trauma-informed, strengths-focused program explores stressors unique to LGBT2Q+ youth, including identity and expression invalidation, stigma, prejudice and discrimination, internalized oppression, coming out, safety, and microaggressions.

## Session Topics Include:

- 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 (Part 1)
- SESSION 6: MY MIND MATTERS: Mental Health and Well-Being (Part 2)
- SESSION 7: THINKING AHEAD: Making Safer Choices About Substance Use
- SESSION 8: I BELONG: Communities and Connections
- SESSION 9: MY SUPER-POWER: Coping with Challenges
- SESSION 10: WE ALL HAVE A SAY: Rights/Responsibilities/Consent
- SESSION 11: MY VOICE, YOUR VOICE: Active Listening and Communication
- SESSION 12: RIGHT AND TRUE: Communication Styles
- SESSION 13: WORDS AND ACTIONS: Communicating Through Conflict
- SESSION 14: SHIPS: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
- SESSION 15: (RE)BUILDING TIES: Addressing Relationship Violence
- SESSION 16: MY SAFETY: Exits and Safety Plans
- SESSION 17: ALLIES: Being There for Others
- SESSION 18: CONCLUDING CIRCLE: Share and Celebrate



## Summary of Facilitators' Experiences with the HRP for LGBT2Q+ Youth

Facilitators of the HRP for LGBT2Q+ Youth appreciated having a **structured program** to deliver in their Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA). One educator expressed, "I found it **very easy to follow** – the sessions are all organized very clearly and the **sample responses** are helpful as well."

Another facilitator stated:

*"I loved how everything was framed in the program and so thoughtfully done...I loved having **positive affirmations** at the end [of sessions] and a sense of closure. I loved it. I think the kids in my group loved it...just those positive affirmations at the end...the **guiding questions**, having **established rules**. I thought it was all really incredibly wonderful and I definitely think having it available for a GSA is brilliant."*

Facilitators voiced that the program provided a **vital platform for youth to explore and discuss relevant LGBT2Q+ topics** and it helped **build supportive networks** among group members. It also enhanced facilitators' personal understandings of LGBT2Q+ topics, as one educator stated, "I think that [youth] are feeling empowered...and as for me...I am learning a ton!"

Another facilitator outlined the benefits associated with engaging youth in guided conversations about mental health:

*"The group really liked Session #5 on Mental Health and we had a great discussion...I was a bit worried as a student who has been suicidal very recently and hospitalized happened to show up. It went well as **that person saw how supportive the others were towards people in general experiencing suicidal thoughts**...it was a positive experience."*

## Summary of Youth's Experiences with the HRP for LGBT2Q+ Youth

Youth expressed that the program **brought up important topics** that they might not have otherwise examined in their regular GSA meetings. Through participating in the program, youth had a much-needed venue to discuss LGBT2Q+ issues and topics in-depth, **share and learn from each other**, and build supportive networks with those who experience similar stressors. The program helped LGBT2Q+ youth **validate and affirm their identities and expressions**, and provided structured opportunities for youth to **confront and process minority stressors**, and **develop essential coping strategies** to bolster their well-being and manage toxic relationships.



## What are Youth Saying about the Program?

Youth discussed how the program's **structure prompted them to explore topics that they might otherwise overlook or fail to examine in-depth:**

*"...the program sort of brought up some topics we wouldn't have considered, like, by ourselves...it did a better job at, like, promoting topics and discussion than, like, we would have by ourselves"*

**Participants valued the program because it helped them figure out and affirm who they are:**

*"...I liked session two, the mine to name one, because I like having, like, a space where I could describe my own identity, and it would be valid and people wouldn't be like, 'that's not real'"*

*"I think I discovered a little more of myself. You know, I started kind of realizing, 'Hey, like, maybe there's more to gender for me, personally...kind of like figuring out who I am..."*

**The program promoted youth-led discussion, which enabled participants to share and learn from each other:**

*"...[the program] kind of gives us a way to talk to each other and share opinions..."*

*"...the coming out lesson got us all talking and maybe learning more about each other and our situations at home, which led to better support systems"*

**Beyond simply venting about their experiences with prejudice and discrimination, the program set the stage for youth to share insights on how to cope with LGBT2Q+-based oppression (e.g., unsupportive families):**

*"I mean some of [the sessions] got heated 'cause we'd get talking about our family and then the rage would appear...But we did...get to talk about like, 'oh, how should I handle my peers doing this'? 'How should I handle my family doing this'? How should I handle my partner doing this'?"*

*"Like honestly, it's all stuff to help you in life...it's to help you be...a stronger person... it was all, like, really good to see, like different ways of coping and dealing with stuff"*