

INSTRUMENT #3

**SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS: UPDATES TO HEALTHY MARRIAGE AND
RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION**

**TOPIC GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION
WITH PARTICIPATING YOUTH PROGRAM ATTENDEES**

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This guide provides a list of topics and questions that we will use for focus groups with youth in each healthy relationship program. The list of topics is divided into eight subtopics: Introduction, informed consent, icebreaker, recruitment and enrollment, program satisfaction orientation and identity, reaction to material, satisfaction, and closing/thank you. We plan to allocate 90 minutes for each youth focus group, but anticipate variation in focus group length, depending on the model and youth participating. No focus group will exceed 90 minutes, including the introduction, informed consent, and icebreaker.

Proposed new Introduction text:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us today. I'm [INTERVIEWER NAME] and this is my colleague [ASSISTANT NAME], and we're researchers from the Urban Institute, a non-profit social policy organization in Washington, DC.

As we may have mentioned, as part of this study, we are talking to participants in selected Healthy Relationship programs. We hope to learn about your experiences with the Healthy Relationship program, your awareness and understanding of LGB or lesbian, gay, and bisexual orientation and same-sex couples, and how the program may or may not have addressed same-sex couples.

Our meeting today with you will last about 90 minutes. The structure will be rather open-ended, meaning we have a list of questions to cover but you can feel free to respond as much detail as you would like. There is no right or wrong answer for any questions that we ask today and there is no penalty for choosing to not respond to any questions within the focus group. Please be respectful of others answers, perspectives, identity, or curiosity around any subject that we discuss today.

We are providing you a token of appreciation in the form of \$25. If you choose to withdraw from the study during a focus group, you will still be offered the indicated token of appreciation.

Before I begin my questions, I'd like to give you a copy of a consent form that describes our study procedures and your rights as a participant. If you agree to the study procedures, I'll ask you to sign and date your copy.

[NOTES TO FACILITATORS: Give copy of consent form to participant. Continue as participant reads along.]

I'd like to point out a few details on the consent form:

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this data collection are 0970-XXXX and it expires XX/XX/XXXX.

1. First, your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to not answer any question and may stop the interview at any time.
2. Everyone who works on this study has signed a Staff Confidentiality Pledge prohibiting disclosure of anything you say during the interview that would allow someone outside the research team, including government staff and officials, to identify you. The only exception is a researcher may be required by law to report suspicion of immediate harm to yourself, to children, or to others.
3. Your name and other identifying information, such as the program's name and specific location, will be removed from the data to protect your privacy.
4. If we quote anything you share with us, we will not use your name in our report.
5. We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we accurately capture all the details. With your permission, we will audio record the session and take typed notes. These files will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. Once the project is complete, all audio recordings will be destroyed. During the discussion, if you would like to stop the recording while you make a particular comment off the record, please let us know and we will do so.

Do you have any questions about the study procedures?

Would you please sign a copy of our Informed Consent Form, and then may we begin our interview?

[Participant must sign and return one copy and may keep the second copy.]

[If anyone objects to the recording, the researcher who is not leading the interview will need to take thorough notes.]

I. Icebreaker (5 minutes)

- First names (voluntary)
- What would you want for dinner on your birthday?

II. Recruitment and Enrollment (10 minutes)

- How did you learn about this program?
- We know that some people are required to attend [program]. Were any of you required?
 - o If you were required to apply to [program], how did you feel about participating?
- What do you hope to get out of this program?
- What attracted you to [PROGRAM]?
 - o *Probe:* Why did you enroll in [PROGRAM]?

Is there any additional information about recruitment or enrollment that you would like to share?

III. Program Satisfaction and Outcomes (10 minutes)

- Overall, what did you like best about [PROGRAM]?
- Did you learn any information you consider important from [PROGRAM] that you did not know before?
- If the program received a grant and could expand or change, what would you change?
 - o *Probe:* How would you change it?
 - o *Probe:* Why would you change it?
- Would you encourage your friends to be in [NAME OF PROGRAM]?
 - o *Probe:* If so, why?
 - o *Probe:* If not, why not?
- Is there any additional information you'd like to share?

IV. Orientation and Identity (15 minutes)

- Many youth begin to identify or recognize same-sex attraction and begin to identify as gay, lesbian, and bisexual in high school. Are you aware of what these terms mean?
- LGB people are everywhere, but sometimes they don't talk about being LGB in public. When they do start to talk about it in public it is sometimes called "coming out of the closet." Do youth in this [school/other setting] come out of the closet? Tell me more.
- Similarly, same sex couples exist, but sometimes they don't let others know that they are a couple. Do same sex couples in this [school/other setting] let others know that they are a couple? Tell me more.
- Some people use the term "safe space" to mean a place where LGB people and couples can "come out of the closet" without fear of negative repercussions, like bullying. Do you consider your school a safe space for LGB students?

- o *Probe:* Does your school take active measures (i.e. GSCA, signs, etc) to show support for LGB students?
- o *Probe:* In your courses have teachers or administrators addressed LGB issues? How so?
- Is there any additional information you'd like to share?

V. Material on LGB Relationships (15 minutes)

- Did [PROGRAM] discuss LGB issues or same sex couples issues?
 - o *Probe:* In what context? Did it talk about LGB individuals? Did it talk about same sex couples?
 - o *Probe:* Were there any comments or actions that showed individuals interested in discussing LGB issues, or being upset or disagreeing with including a discussion on LGB issues?
- Did LGB issues come up in any discussions during class (perhaps outside of the [PROGRAM] materials themselves)? Tell me more.
- Did LGB issues come up during any activities in the program? What happened?
 - o *Probe:* Did LGB issues come up during any role plays? What happened?
- How did your instructors talk about LGB relationships? Do you have any specific examples?
- Do you wish the program said more about LGB relationships? In what ways?
- If the program could provide more material about LGB relationships, what would you want to know about?
- Is there any additional information on materials used in the program that you would like to share?

VI. Closing/Thank you (5 minutes)

- Is there anything else anyone would like to say about [NAME OF PROGRAM] before we wrap up?

Thank you for your participation today!