



Transcript

Module 1: Welcome & Group Agreements

[SQUINCH Curriculum](#)
[Module 1: Video](#)

Students, folks, fellow New Mexicans! Welcome to the best thing to happen to GSA's since the Equal Access Act: SQUINCH! That is, Sharing Queer Understanding, Inclusion, Nonviolent Communication, and Health! I'm Stacy Fatemi, my pronouns are they/them, and I'm your presenter for the day! This is the first installment of a healthy relationship skills video series. Today we're just gonna cover curriculum, talk about group agreements, stuff like that. So, let's get to it!

The Health Equity Alliance for LGBTQ+ New Mexicans, also known as HEAL+NM, first created a healthy relationship skills course for adults, and then we were asked for a youth-oriented one. So, we reached out to leaders of GSA's around the state, and asked them what they wanted to know about healthy queer relationships, and in turn, we created the first 9 modules of this curriculum to help facilitate conversations about healthy queer relationships! Each module is designed to be done in one GSA meeting, but it can be extended if you all want more discussion. They can really be done in any order, so choose the modules that speak to you! This curriculum is designed to help GSA's define and foster healthy relationships, while stimulating critical thinking and self-reflection. We hope that, through said curriculum, you all will learn and practice skills that will improve your relationships! And trust me, this is neither scary nor difficult! I would've killed for something like this when I was in middle and high school, which is why I'm so glad to be presenting it now!

Okay, modules! Modules, modules, modules! Each module has a video. Good job on finding this one. The rest of the SQUINCH modules and materials can be found on our website, healplusnm.org. The video is created to show to your GSA, and it introduces a concept or a skill. Each one also comes with a PDF of the facilitator's guide. In that facilitator's guide are instructions and

additional discussion questions and information, if any. It'll also have links to where you can find further information, inspiration, and activities. Uh, some modules have materials that can be printed out ahead of time. (Those are in the leader's guide.) Lastly, each video comes with a complete transcript. Also, half of them feature me. Sorry, I don't make the rules.

These modules are a resource. Use them as you see fit. We do encourage youth leaders in the GSA to facilitate conversation and discussions, but adult leaders can as well.

Now, one way to make your club feel safer for everyone is to decide on group agreements. These are sometimes called community agreements, group norms, club rules, GSA expectations... it doesn't matter what you call them, as long as they are a set of social guidelines that you all create together to make this a better space to have meetings in. So, go ahead and decide as a group what you're gonna call these things, and post it up on the wall for everyone to see so they don't forget. I, uh, I sure hope that safe in-person schooling has resumed by the time you're watching this, cause it is February 2021 right now, and I am Suffering™. I'm sure you all were too. [chuckles]

Okay! Go ahead and pause the video and grab some paper and markers. When you press play again, I will go over some example group agreements that you may choose to adopt. Don't worry, I will wait. I actually remembered to do that this time. [chuckles]

All ready? Okay. Here are those example agreements I was talking about. You can pause in between each one to ask the group how they feel about them.

Number 1: **Don't yuck my yum!** This means that everyone likes what they like, and as long as it's not hurting anybody, we seek to support shame-free sexuality. If someone says "I love beards," and someone else says "I think beards are gross," it makes the first person feel shameful about their love of facial hair. Instead, we should encourage statements like, "I don't relate to your love of beards, but I could see it," or, "I personally don't like beards, but I love your passion for them!"

Next up: **One speaker at a time**, or **"I'm holding the conch shell!"** if you've read *Lord of the Flies* already. Basically, this means listening to each

other fully without interrupting, and avoiding side conversations and crosstalk so we can all be present with each other.

Take space... make space. This is about making sure you're giving others the opportunity to speak on topics, especially ones that you're not an expert on. If you're someone who doesn't talk often in a group, then you are encouraged to speak up when it feels good to you.

Here's another one: **avoid generalizations, or, make "I" statements.** Broad generalizations are usually inaccurate. So, try to speak from your own experiences! Instead of saying "all gay people love drag shows," you could say, "I, like many other gay people I know, love drag shows."

Respect pronouns and names. I'm gonna put my foot on the scale for this one and implore every single one of you to adopt this one. It's not just something respectful to do; using the correct names and pronouns of everyone in the class— especially those of us who haven't used the same name and pronoun all our life— is more of a basic human right situation. Make no mistake that **intentional** deadnaming and misgendering is a heinous act, and reducing **unintentional** deadnaming and misgendering is something we owe to all of our peers. We can't even begin to have any sort of constructive conversation without using the self-stated names and pronouns of everyone in the room. Also, recognize that some people might not have a pronoun, or that they might change it, and seek to reflect this fact by making a space at the beginning of each meeting to update names and pronouns.

Challenge by choice. This is a way of saying that anyone can opt out of any activity they want. We want people to participate because they want to, and not feel any pressure if they don't.

What happens in GSA stays in GSA. Confidentiality is crucial because experiences are shared in GSA that aren't meant for any other audience. Also, some people don't want their participation in GSA shared at all. Ask that person's permission before divulging any pertinent information about them, including the fact that they even go to GSA. There are certain exceptions to this rule, such as if you express intent to harm yourself or others, but I'm sure you all already knew that.

Affirm and address harm. We have to create environment in which people feel safe enough to say that they've been hurt. Spaces are made safe by the actions of the people within them, and one way we can do that is by affirming and addressing harm, whether it's a minor slight or a big deal. This can look like someone expressing their hurt, and someone apologizing for what they've done. You might hear someone say, "oof, it really hurt when you said I wasn't a 'real' bisexual," and the person who said it might say, "I'm sorry, tell me more?" Try to be mindful of power and privilege when talking about harm, and leave room for affirmation before moving on to someone else's harm. Open conversations and meaningful self-accountability create safer spaces and build trust. Remember to look out for Module 4, where you can learn how to make an excellent apology! ...to your roommate, who is also a tiny cow.

Make consent our culture. This is about setting and respecting physical and emotional boundaries, like asking before hugging or taking photos. This agreement makes consent a value of your group. And remember, the more you practice asking and giving consent, the easier it gets.

Last example: no war stories. When talking about particularly heavy topics, make sure you're prefacing any heavy material with content warnings— also known as trigger warnings, from back before the word "triggered" was co-opted. and subsequently stripped of all meaning by political pundits. If someone wants to share a personal experience that could potentially bring up upsetting feelings and memories in other people in the group, maybe allow them to share it after the meeting has ended with the leaders and anyone who wants to listen! This allows anyone who doesn't feel comfortable listening to the story to still stay for the whole meeting, and it allows the people who want to share the opportunity to do so.

Those are the example guidelines we came up with. What do you think? Will you adopt some or all of them? Take some time to also think about what other community agreements you might choose to adopt, and how you might implement them!

Okay, we're wrapping up. But, before that, I want to let you all know that we want to hear your feedback on this curriculum and get your ideas for new modules! We ask each member of the GSA's to please fill out the survey to

provide us with that information. The link can be found at the end of each module, and it's the same one for every module.

That does it for the introductory module! Proceed to the other modules in any order you like, and I hope you all have a great rest of your day, week, month, or whatever other time interval your GSA meets at.

Survey link: <https://tinyurl.com/mw9m6bd7>