

## Session 7C: Panel Discussion

### Learning Objectives:

- To interact with and learn from various members of the community about what has happened, is happening, and could happen with regard to bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender issues in the community
- To further explore the concept and possibilities of change
- To learn more about the various groups in the community outside of the church

### Session Summary:

This session will allow for the group to interact with people from the community who are involved in bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender concerns. It is an opportunity for a conversation about the community, the groups/organizations within the community, the history of the community and its changes over time.

### Background:

It is important in this section of the curriculum for the group to interact with people from outside of the congregation. Relationships, if not already formed, should be encouraged with these groups. They will have valuable insights into what is needed in their particular communities. It is very important, particularly if the participants are primarily heterosexual and not already actively involved in the b/g/l/t community to listen well and follow the lead of the b/g/l/t leaders about what is needed.

In some communities there may not be a group or groups that are easy to access for speakers. You may have to rely on individuals in the community or speakers from neighboring communities. If finding a panel seems overwhelming, you may wish to consult with the Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and

Transgender Concerns ([obgltc@uua.org](mailto:obgltc@uua.org)) for suggestions.

### Materials:

- None

### Preparation:

- Create the panel ahead of time. Ideally you will find 3 – 5 people to speak. Try to invite people who are good public speakers with a solid concept of history.
- Tell the panelists that they will be speaking about the history of their group as it relates to b/g/l/t concerns as well as how these concerns are a part of the community history. They can also speak about what they are doing, what they hope to do, and ways in which this congregation might be an ally to their work. They will each have about 10-15 minutes (depending on the number speakers) to make their presentation and then there will be questions and answers.
- Give the speakers a bit of background about what the congregation is engaged in with this work now and why the panel was invited to converse with the participants.
- Ask the speakers how they would like to be introduced ahead of time.
- Arrange the room so there is easy interaction with the speakers. Microphones may be useful in larger rooms or with many people.

## Workshop Plan

### Opening Reading/Hymn (5 Minutes)

*(You are invited to pick a reading and/or an opening hymn. Singing The Living Tradition is an excellent resource. Other options are a moment of silence, a prayer, or a brief check-in. You are encouraged to also begin with a chalice lighting. Please submit any readings and/or hymn choices that you have used successfully to the OBGLTC as feedback for possible inclusion in future editions of LWC.)*

### Activities:

#### Panel (90 + minutes)

Welcome the participants and inform them that the workshop tonight will be in the form of a panel. Explain that several representatives from the community have been invited to come and speak. Each speaker will have 10-15 minutes (depending on total number of speakers) to tell about their group, their group's history, what they are working on now, and what they hope to accomplish. This should take slightly less than the first half of the session.

The second half of the session should be questions and answers. Discussion should include questions about how change happens, what are some of the roadblocks and successes that have been faced, in what ways can the congregation be allies to their work, and other questions about the history of the community.

Toward the end of the allotted time allow each panelist to have a few minutes for parting remarks, to summarize, or to challenge the group. Thank the panelists for their contributions to the evening and tell the class participants that the next session will take into account what they have learned over the last several sessions to formulate a plan of action.

### Closing Reading/Hymn (5 minutes)

*(You are encouraged to find a suitable one. The difference between the Opening and Closing is that we suggest that one reading and/or one hymn is selected to be used as the closing for all sessions. The Opening may vary from session to session.)*

### Suggested Hymns

### Suggested Readings

### Add Your Suggestion

Ask participants to hold hands as they are willing, able, and comfortable.