

## Large Group Go-Round: *Exploring our own Homophobia*

Materials: newsprint or chart paper on an easel, markers, tape, and wall space if easel is not available.

### Room set-up:

- [] have everyone sit in a circle, not spread out, but with enough room for people to feel comfortable and with the facilitator/s standing inside the circle.
- [] have blank newsprint on the wall or chart paper on an easel be part of the circle or just outside the circle so that it can be seen by all participants in the circle.

### The activity to be facilitated:

- [] everyone will be asked to answer each question (**listed below in bold**) with no discussion except between facilitator and person answering.
- [] each question should be answered by everyone around the room before moving on to the next question.
- [] responses to each question should be one word or phrase that clearly expresses a "**feeling**" not an explanation or reaction that resists answering the question [e.g. "but I'm not gay", "I don't care", etc.].
- [] co-facilitator should document all answers to each question on newsprint in 3 columns (1<sup>st</sup> column for question #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> column for question #2, and so on).
- [] avoid discussion, suggesting that it can occur after all questions are answered by everyone.
- [] remind people, if necessary but without much discussion, that the question is about people who **thought** you were lesbian/gay...not that you are.
- [] **question #1: "How would you feel if someone thought you were lesbian/gay?"**  
[begin by asking one man, question #1 about being gay, then asking one woman question #1 about being lesbian but ask them NOT TO ANSWER but to think about what their answer would be....then ask everyone in the room to imagine they were the first person asked....what would be their most immediate answer?...hold that answer and share it when we go around the room for answers...we want to get everyone's first reaction/response.
- [] **question #2: "How would you feel if that someone were your best friend?"**  
[before reading question #2, ask everyone to think about a best friend and keep that best friend in mind for question #2 and question #3]
- [] **question #3: "How would you feel if you found out that your best friend was lesbian/gay?"**

### Processing the activity:

- how did you feel about doing this exercise?
- what observations can you make about our group as a whole?
- did anything come up for you as you listened to people answer the questions.

- looking back over responses, explore why people have such intense feelings. What's behind someone who says "It's okay as long as they don't touch me" ... "I don't mind having gay people around" ... "But I'm not gay..." etc.

**At this point, revisit the reactions/responses...ask:**

- 1) How do you think lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people felt as they heard us giving our answers?  
**DO NOT ALLOW FOR ANY RESPONSES AT THIS TIME.**
- 2) Let's read back over the answers/responses we gave for the first question. This is what we said about how we felt about someone thinking we were lesbian/gay. **SLOWLY AND CLEARLY, READ OUT LOUD ALL THE RESPONSES TO THE FIRST QUESTION.**
- 3) Now entertain answers to "how do you think lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people felt as they heard us giving our answers?"
- 4) Ask what makes a "best friend"....explore what that means in terms of the replies people gave about how they felt in questions #2 and #3...

Other questions to consider?

- \* **"How would you feel if your partner was lesbian/gay?"**
- \* **"How would you feel if your child came out to you as lesbian/gay?"**
- \* **"How would you feel if you found out that your parent was lesbian/gay?"**

Notes:

Where people are really upset/angry about anyone "assuming" they are gay...ask: "Would you be just as upset/angry if someone assumed you were straight?"

If you were lesbian/gay, is your best friend the first person you would tell or one of the last because it is the one relationship you don't want to risk losing.

Did anyone answering question #3 express feelings of happiness or joy over finding out that a best friend is lesbian/gay? If not, what is that all about?