

## Meeting 4 ...

### *Family and Church Dynamics*

**Goals:** Students will share their family and church experiences as LGBTQ+ youth, for the purpose of catharsis, bonding, and giving and receiving non-judgmental acceptance (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Students will learn of resources available for LGBTQ+ families.

**Icebreaker:** Have each student draw a diagram with themselves in the middle, with lines connecting them to their immediate family members, their extended family, and supportive/unsupportive non-school institutions (church, sports teams, etc). Colors/lines can show emotions and strength of bonds. (For example: solid line - strong bond/strong feelings; dashed line - weak bond/feelings; dotted line - very weak; green - positive bond/feelings; red - anger; blue - sadness; etc. You can develop your own key.)

#### ***Suggested Activities***

- Family dynamics have a large impact on LGBTQ+ youth (Higa et al., 2014). Discuss the Icebreaker diagrams. Students can talk about how their family relationships are affected by their LGBTQ+ status (which might include keeping it hidden). Talk about other systems, such as church, which offer acceptance or lack of acceptance.
- Students who feel comfortable can talk about their experiences. Others may just want to ask questions, or listen. This is a difficult subject for many. While the discussion can be important to have and hear, not all students will want to take part, and that is okay.

#### ***Tips***

- If the school social worker or psychologist would be willing to attend this meeting, it might be helpful for some students. Otherwise, students who share difficult experiences should be given referrals by the Faculty Advisor to talk with the social worker or psychologist.
- Give students information on PFLAG and other LGBTQ+ adolescent family support groups. Their families might wish to contact those groups.