



# Training Activity Notebook 2013

**In recognition of the unique needs of Black and Latin@ LGBTQ/T individuals, the Violence Recovery Program at Fenway Health, Hispanic Black Gay Coalition, The Network/La Red and Renewal House have partnered to spearhead a partner abuse prevention and intervention project called TOD@S (Transforming Ourselves through Dialogue, Organizing and Services). TOD@S is funded by the United States Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women.**

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## Activity: How Do You Know Your Gender (Identity)?

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials: Chart paper, markers

Objectives:

- To have participants reflect on their own gender
- To demonstrate that gender, and more specifically, gender presentation is fluid
- To show that gender identity is an *internal* feeling
- To show that gender expression is *external* and does not necessarily reflect someone's gender identity

Directions:

1. Ask participants to take a minute or two to write down the ways they know they are their gender.
  - You may have to elaborate by saying. "How do you know you're a woman?", "How do you know you're a man?" etc.
2. Once everyone has written down their answers, pair people off and ask them to share what they wrote
3. Bring the group back together to debrief what they've done so far. Some questions to prompt conversation could include:
  - Was this easy? Was it hard? What made it easy/difficult to complete?
  - Did you notice anything? Did anything surprise you?
4. Ask the group to share some of the answers that they wrote down and record it on the chart paper
5. Once you've gotten responses, ask the group how they would know their gender is all these things were taken away. Some examples could include:
  - What if you didn't have a vagina/penis/long or short hair? How would you know you're a man/woman?
  - If you couldn't wear makeup, do your nails or hair, or wear dresses, how would you know you're a woman?
  - If you didn't have a deep voice, how would you know you're a man?
  - What if no one told you what your gender was, how would you know?
6. If the group does not come to the conclusion that gender/gender identity is the internal feeling, bring the group in the direction by debriefing their answers.
7. If it isn't brought up, note to the group that sometimes someone's gender expression does not "match" their gender identity.

Potential pitfalls:

1. The group might need more than the question, “What is your gender?” Some people have never thought of their own gender before, so you might have to ask straight forward question likes “How do you know you’re a man/woman?”

## **Activity: LGBTQ POC Stereotypes Brainstorm**

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Materials:** chart paper, marker

### **Objectives:**

- To uncover racist and homo/bi/transphobic statements and ideas.
- To demonstrate what LGBTQ POC might experience in the shelter.
- To strategize how to address these stereotypes.

**Directions: (make sure anyone in Tod@s could pick this up and follow these instructions to make the activity successful)**

1. Put up a piece of blank chart paper.
2. Tell the group “We are going to do a brainstorm”
3. Prompt the group, “A LGBTQ POC comes into your shelter (or program). What are the other residents saying about them?”
4. Start writing down some of the messages/stereotypes
5. To get at other stereotypes, you can prompt around specific identities “What would they say if it was a Black trans woman?” “How about a Latino gay man?” “Or a black lesbian?”
6. Once you have gotten a few stereotypes around several LGBTQ identities (trans, gay man, bisexual woman, etc) and both Black and Latino identities, start drawing some conclusions about the messages. Note similarities between messages, themes about being dangerous or promiscuous or untrustworthy.
7. Tell the group, “These messages have a huge affect on LGBTQ POC survivors feelings of safety in shelter. They can also internalize these messages which may affect their willingness to ask for help from service providers. All of us have heard these messages and we have to make sure we are aware of them and actively work against them within ourselves and interrupt these messages when then occur in our presence.”
8. Ask the group ways they might address or interrupt some of the messages that were brainstormed.
9. Wrap up the exercise with some examples of how to address the messages. For example: Referring to anti-discrimination policies, relating it to an oppression that the resident experiences (ie... “We want everyone to feel safe here. You know that we would interrupt someone using \_\_\_\_\_ slurs against you, in the same way we don’t want you to use \_\_\_\_\_ slurs against this person”)
10. Ask them if it seems possible to say these things to interrupt. Are they feeling nervous about it? Talk about the positive outcome of interrupting the message. The survivor feels supported and may see you as an ally. Everyone learns from the experience.
11. (If time allows have them practice in pairs interrupting one of the messages)

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**Potential Pitfalls: (list a few things that might go wrong or that may typically come up and offer suggestions)**

1. The group may be hesitant to say the more offensive things that a resident may say. Try to make sure the group knows that these aren't messages they necessarily believe but that the resident (or participant) might say.

**Attachments:** see below

**List of potential messages:**

Trans: "What is that?"

"She let a girl beat her up?"

"I don't want him around my children"

"He's confused. He doesn't know what he is."

"Pervert"

"He probably has AIDS"

"She doesn't even speak English"

"Isn't this a part of their culture?"

"She just says she is bisexual to get attention."

"I didn't know Puerto Ricans could be gay."

"They are gay because they have light skin and are more Americanized"

## **Activity:** Tactics Scenario

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Materials:** handouts, visual of cycle/wave of abuse

### **Objectives:**

- To help participants identify tactics of abuse
- To show culturally specific tactics
- To show examples of LGBTQ/T specific tactics

### **Directions:**

1. Introduce Cycle/Wave of Abuse (according to whichever model your program uses)
2. Handout Scenario
3. Tell participants to underline the tactics of abuse in the story.
4. Have the participants discuss the questions in the handout in their small groups
5. Circulate around the room to answer any questions.
6. If time have the groups share some of the tactics they came up with
7. Add additional tactics that are not included in the story (this can be slides or another handout)

**Attachments:** hand out on next page

## Participant Handout

### Scenario: Alex and Marissa

I met Alex at BAGLY when I was a junior at English. She's so hot and everyone wants to be with her. She's the only one I ever think about. Everyone says I'm so lucky to have her for a girlfriend. (pause)

Alex makes me feel so awesome. She's so popular but she always says that she needs me. I feel pretty hot when I'm around her. (pause)

She can be demanding though. She doesn't want me to even look at other girls. (pause)

The other day this other girl, Ebony, started flirting with me and told she liked me. Alex found out and got all up in Ebony's face, and they fought. I guess Alex won because Ebony hasn't even looked at me since then. (pause)

I don't really look at anyone else, but she's always so sure that I'm checking out my other options. She can get pretty jealous. (pause)

Going out with her is great though. It feels like we're in our own little world. (pause)

The day after my birthday though, she got really mad when she was trying to call me and I didn't answer my cell because it was dead. She said she really needed to talk to me but couldn't get ahold of me. When I asked her what was wrong, she said it didn't matter anymore. Since then she always wants to know where I'm going, even if I'm just playing basketball with my brothers. (pause)

If I go somewhere without telling her, she'll always call or text me on my cell phone constantly and then accuses me of being somewhere I shouldn't be. Usually she's convinced that I'm out with another girl, even though that's not true. (pause)

Yesterday I was on the phone with my mom, she and I speak Spanish with each other, and when I got off the phone Alex made fun of me and said that as long as I'm in America I should be speaking English. Sometimes she even makes fun of me and says that she's going to have me and my family deported, which sucks because she knows my mom doesn't have papers. That made me feel like crap, and she says that kind of stuff to me all the time lately. (pause)

.....

I still love her though and I know she gets angry because she just loves me so much. Even though we fight we have an awesome sex life. (pause)

But the other day, we were messing around and she started slapping me. It caught me off guard and it didn't make me feel good, it even kind of hurt. I told her that I didn't like it. She said, "this is how lesbians have sex. Aren't you supposed to be gay?" That was weird, and it kind of turned me off. (pause)

Things are getting worse. The other day I was talking to her about dressing more like a dude, and oh my God, she got so mad. She told me that she is the stud and I am the femme and that she would be embarrassed to hold my hand in public if I dressed the wrong way. (pause)

.....

Every once in awhile, I get so frustrated with her mood swings that I try to break up with her. She always comes back crying, "I love you. I need you." she says she's sorry and that she can be a bad girlfriend sometimes, but that if I love her, I'll help her work through these things. She texts me constantly and leave me a million voicemails saying that we need to be together, that we're meant to be, and whenever that happens, even though it feels like a lot, I remember how amazing she can be. (pause)

She would be the perfect girlfriend if she learned to control her temper and stopped getting so jealous. She says I'm the only one that will ever understand, and that if she can get better, I'd be the one to help her out with that. I know she loves me. (pause)

### **Activity:**

- 1. Underline the tactics of abuse in the story**
- 2. Discuss the following questions with your partner or group:**
  - a. Why is it a tactic?**
  - b. Are you unsure about some of these tactics?**
  - c. What tactics are LGBTQ/T specific?**
  - d. What tactics are culturally specific?**



## **Activity:** You are the Survivor; Make a Choice

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Materials:** enough copies of each station card for all the groups

### **Objectives:**

- To help participants identify barriers to services to LGBTQ/T survivors of partner abuse
- To enhance participants empathy for the experiences of survivors

### **Directions:**

1. Place the station cards in different places around the room (ideally groups should have enough space to move around to each station easily)
2. Explain that the activity is to put the participants in the shoes of a survivor and that they will read the scenario and makes decisions as the survivor as a team. Remind the group that there are no wrong answers.
3. Warn the group that the scenario does contain abuse and encourage the group to do whatever they need to do to take care of themselves during the exercise.
4. Count off the participants into groups according to the number of “begin here” cards that you have (ie.. if you have 5 cards, have the group count to five and split into 5 groups. Groups can have anywhere between 2-5 people)
5. Handout the “Begin here” card to each group once they have formed.
6. Be available for questions and to direct people to the stations as they do the activity.
7. Once groups have had a chance to get to the last stations, encourage them to discuss the questions on the last card (station 9 or 10)
8. Gather the group back together once everyone has had a chance to discuss. Ask questions like: How did it feel to be the survivor in this scenario? What barriers did you face?

### **Potential Pitfalls: (list a few things that might go wrong or that may typically come up and offer suggestions)**

1. Participants may feel that the choices are unrealistic- you can let them know that while the scenario is artificial, the barriers are real.
2. Participants may start victim blaming or mentioning violence- explore the potential consequences of violence and/or talk about how it is difficult for survivors to leave.

**Attachments:** hand out on next page. Print double sided, cut out the cards, and organize each station together using paperclips.

## **You are the survivor: Make a choice**

### **Starting point:**

You a Black Trans Woman named Cleo. You and your boyfriend, Ron, have been living together for six months. Ron is white and identifies as straight and he is the first man you've dated since you've transitioned. You feel really comfortable with Ron and he always tells you are a beautiful queen. On the other hand he also tells you that now that you are a woman you have to do all the cleaning and cooking and he wants you to give him your paycheck because he is the man of the house. You feel a little weird about it, but you do want to embrace you new roll as a woman. One day you get a notice in the mail that the bills haven't been paid and the lights and cable will be turned off. You confront Ron and he blows up at you. He blames you and throws your hair straightener across the room saying it uses too much electricity. He starts tearing up your favorite dress and telling you that no one else will love you but him.

What do you do next?

Leave the room and call a friend (Go to station 1)

Apologize and try to get him to calm down. (Go to Station 2)

### **Station 1:**

You go to another room and you call your best friend, Denise and tell her what happened. She tells you that you are overreacting and that Ron is a good guy. He always buys you nice clothes and designer purses. Denise says "At least you have someone." You start to think maybe she is right. Ron comes in screaming at you asking who you are talking to. You tell him Denise and he doesn't believe you. "Are you sleeping with some other guy? Are you turning tricks? I know all you he-shes are hookers." He gets increasingly violent and you start to be afraid.

What do you do now?

Call the police (go to station 3)

Flee the house (go station 4)

# Begin Here

## Station 1

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**Station 2:**

You apologize to Ron and try to get him to calm down. You tell him that he is right and that you won't use the hair straightener any more. He says, "if you are really sorry, prove it" and takes off his pants. You are scared and not in the mood to have sex but you know that is the only way he will really calm down. You have sex and he falls asleep. The next day he comes home with a new dress for you. Things are okay for another week and then he comes home and accuses you of "being a ho." You tell him that you are faithful to him and he slaps you across the face and calls you a liar.

What do you do next?

Call the police (station 3)

Flee the house (station 4)

**Station 3:**

You run to the bedroom and lock the door. You call the police and tell them that your boyfriend is being violent and threatening you. Ron is outside the door screaming and cursing the whole time. Then he is quiet. He laughs, "Do you really think the police are going to help someone like you? The police are going to believe me because I am white and you're Black." The police knock on the door and Ron answers. He tells the police that you started the fight. You run out of the room and start yelling that he is lying and tell them what really happened. The police arrest you instead of Ron. They put you in a cell in the men's jail where other inmates start cat-calling you as you walked by. You are too afraid to sleep that night and stay up all night to protect yourself. You get released on bail the next morning. What do you do next?

Call a domestic violence program (station 8)

Go home and try to make it better (station 7)

# Station 2

# Station 3

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#### **Station 4:**

You grab your purse and run out of the house. He yells, “You better come back here” after you. You start walking away from the apartment, crying. You try to think of where to go at this hour and start heading down Blue Hill Ave to see if there is anywhere open at this time of night. A police cruiser slows down and you over the officer say, “Look at that tranny mess. You know she’s working.” You ignore them and keep walking but they stop you and search your purse. When they find condoms, they says that this is proof and arrests you for prostitution.

What do you do next?

Call Ron to bail you out (station 5)

Call a domestic violence program (station 8)

#### **Station 5**

You call Ron to bail you out. He comes and gets you, but once you are in the car he starts screaming at you, telling you this is proof that you are a “ho” and to give him the money that you made. You tell him that you don’t turn tricks. He grabs your wallet and takes all the money out of it. When you get home he tells you he can’t trust you to go out alone and monitors you constantly. You decide to get him drunk and then pack a bag and slip out once he is passed out. What do you do next?

Call a domestic violence program (station 8)

Go to your pastor (Station 6)

#### **Station 6**

You go to your church and speak to your Pastor. You tell him about what has been happening between you and Ron. He tells you, “You decided to create this lifestyle for yourself. You made your bed. Now lay in it.” You are shocked and hurt but ask if there is anything you can do. He says “If you want to pray, pray this lifestyle away.”

What do you do next?

Call a domestic violence program (station 8)

Go back home (station 10)

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# Station 4

# Station 5

# Station 6

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### **Station 7**

You go home with Ron and try to make it better. Things are okay for a little while. He says, “let’s put this mess behind us” and you both drop any charges. Then he starts getting suspicious and jealous again. He thinks that you are starting to look “too much” like a woman and other men are looking at you. He throws away your estrogen pills and doesn’t let you go to the doctor to get more. He starts monitoring your phone and doesn’t let you leave the house. You decide to get him drunk one night and get him to pass out so you can sneak out of the house.

Call a domestic violence program (station 8)

Go to a friend’s house (Station 6)

### **Station 8**

Once you get out, you call Safelink and ask for help finding a domestic violence shelter. You are accepted into a shelter. You get there and do the intake with a staff member who asks “have you had the surgery yet?” and asks you a series of humiliating questions about your body. When you are done you head into the shelter’s kitchen to meet the other residents. One woman says “What is that?” and points to you. While another says, “stay away from my children!”

What do you do next?

Report this to staff (station 9).

Pack up and go home (station 10).



# Station 7

# Station 8

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### **Station 9**

You tell the staff about what the other residents said about you. They tell you to keep to yourself and that you will be fine. You try to go back to the shelter but still the residents either harass you or are unfriendly. You decide that maybe Ron is right. No one else will love you or accept you for who you are. At least Ron is nice some of the time. You go back home and apologize, hoping that things will get better.

#### **Discuss in your group:**

What barriers did you face?

How did it feel to face these barriers?

What could your program do to help alleviate some of these barriers?

How would your program treat Cleo?

### **Station 10**

You decide that maybe Ron is right. No one else will love you or accept you for who you are. At least Ron is nice some of the time. You go back home and apologize, hoping that things will get better.

#### **Discuss in your group:**

What barriers did you face as Cleo?

How did it feel to face these barriers?

What could your program do to help alleviate some of these barriers?

How would your program treat Cleo?

# Station 9

# Station 10

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