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Intergenerational Space-Holding Within Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Other Gender & Sexual Minority Communities

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Running head: INTERGENERATIONAL LGBTQ+ SPACE

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& Sexual Minority Communities

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CAPSTONE PAPER SIGNATURE PAGE

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AUTHOR: Shaun William Kevin Connors

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Audrey Falk, Ed.D.   *Audrey Falk*   5/10/19
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In a 2015 keynote address at Camp Pride, Diego Rivera said "don't wait your turn, turn your weight" while discussing LGBTQ+ activism, this would later empower me to begin the pursuit of this project. It's because of activists like Diego, Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Mara Keisling, Gavin Grimm, Les Feinberg, Kate Bornstein, S. Bear Bergman, and countless others that I continue this work in the hope that it empowers the next generation of LGBTQ+ activists. To my LGBTQ+ academic mentors, Drs. Liz Ahl, Katie Herzig, Jay Irwin, Amy Milligan, and Wendy Palmquist--thank you for being a friend.

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Abstract

This project examined the ways LGBTQ+ communities document, share, and connect to their histories. It supported an interactive, sensory learning-based workshop that fostered exploration and learning in LGBTQ+ and adjacent communities. The workshop was attended by a variety of participants who showed the markers of having engaged in a cultural third space while learning about and engaging with LGBTQ+ history-based information. Overall, the workshop was a resounding success and provided opportunities for further research and exploration into the connections between how people access their personal and cultural histories and what pathways are provided for them to do so.

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Intergenerational Space-Holding Within Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Other Gender
& Sexual Minority Communities

Widespread acceptance of some aspects of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other Gender and Sexual Minority communities' (LGBTQ+) culture occurs with regularity. There are even trends toward appropriation into normative United States culture. However, there are still no widespread efforts to create cultural institutions that preserve the rich history or highlight the rapidly changing landscape of these LGBTQ+ cultures. Community elders may feel as if they belong to an entirely different community than their youthful counterparts and that the youth may feel disconnected with their community and its history.

Many other cultural groups have assimilated into United States culture at the cost of some of their cultural heritage. This is evident in communities such as the East Asian-American communities taking on the role of "model minorities" after decades of marginalization and isolation in mainstream society. This phenomenon multiplies when we consider intersectionalities of the LGBTQ+ and other identity groups such as LGBTQ+ people of color, people who are LGBTQ+ and religious, and older people who are LGBTQ+.

In examining these phenomena, research such as that done by DeGruy, Denham, Mohatt, and others reveals the long-term impact of assimilation into colonialist United States culture. Communities forced into this assimilation experience these effects when not provided opportunities to embrace and learn about their personal historical contexts. Examples of this include Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome (DeGruy, 2005), struggles faced by Native American and other First Nations/Indigenous Peoples, and those excommunicated from certain tight-knit religious communities, such as the Amish.

This initiative serves to foster the creation of space within LGBTQ+ communities. The initiative focuses on youth and elders because the exclusion of those populations happens easily within the spaces they traditionally claim, such as bars and nightclubs. Those spaces are inherently exclusionary of age, accessibility, culture, or a myriad of other factors. For examples, drinking age will not allow minors to enter the space, and elders might feel socially accepted. Most often when people think of LGBTQ+ culture they think of a brief list of things: Pride parades, 'Gay' bars, drag, HIV/AIDS and specific people such as Oscar Wilde, Ellen DeGeneres, Freddie Mercury, Alice Walker, Harvey Milk, etc. These people and moments in time lack the nuance to adequately convey the vibrancy of LGBTQ+ communities.

Many people often wonder when there will be "enough," adequate tolerance or acceptance, and programs that effectively serve LGBTQ+ communities. Increasingly, among LGBTQ+ activist communities, there is growing concern that substantial portions of the White, Cisgender, Lesbian and Gay communities slowed their support and progress of equitable policy initiatives after the Obergefell v. Hodges case of 2015, which led to nationally recognized same-gender marriage. For example, when the Human Rights Campaign spearheaded the passage of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA) (Bogardus, 2013), they allowed allies to remove the protection of transgender Americans rights from the proposed legislation. Initiatives like those do not provide just or complete equity to many subsets of the communities, especially those who belong to communities of color, people who are transgender, and those experiencing a host of other marginalizing factors. Representation and engagement matter when working with marginalized populations and prevention-oriented efforts often cost less to fund overall than intervention or postvention efforts.

This project seeks to bridge generation gaps within LGBTQ+ communities through intentional opportunities to connect intergenerationally. In the proposed workshop, The Green Carnation Initiative, participants will have opportunities to share questions, cultural comparisons, and to hold space for people to share, and preserve, their histories. The workshop seeks to serve as a catalyst to activate two subsets of LGBTQ+ communities and hold space for them to engage with intention and meaning. Through these intentional interactions, attendees will acquire a greater sense of appreciation for their identity, history, and acquire greater knowledge about the concepts of assimilation, LGBTQ+ space, and social justice concepts.

Literature Review

In his milestone work as a critical theorist, *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha introduced the notion of Cultural Space Theory (1994) wherein he coined the notion of the third space. Cultural space, specifically called "third space" is the physical space in which a person gains critical cultural knowledge about their social context and history. He also introduces potential methods that marginalized communities use to assimilate effectively into mainstream or powerful cultures. Concepts such as cultural mimicry, the marginalized communities taking on the culture of those in power, or colonizers, to assimilate and seek to avoid assertion of power from those who hold it. These notions are based upon the expectation of immigrants to the United States and other hegemonies, especially those with colonialist histories, to assimilate into the dominant culture of those societies instead of acculturating to it while keeping their own personal context. Cultural theory posits that after one has assimilated into a culture, they seek a physical space in which to explore their personal sense of self while being with their self-identified community; examples of this include barbershops for people of color or bars for

LGBTQ+ communities. These spaces espouse implied relative safety, cultural information, and spaces to further explore identity within communities instead of mainstream society.

Cultural Space Theory hints at notions contained within the theory of Post-Structuralism, which posits that there is a third option in what many people perceive as binary systems of understanding (Colebrook, 2002). This relates to LGBTQ+ communities because they thrive outside or despite traditional colonialist power structures. In the United States, this means that these communities prosper in a location where Protestant Christian work ethic and values dictate much of the overarching cultural mores.

Queerphobia (Victoria Cross Campus Women's Network, 2010) is an amalgamation of homophobia and transphobia, defined by Merriam-Webster as the fear of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or any other sexuality that is not heterosexuality and the fear of people whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth, or those who are not transgender, respectively. Queerphobia has impacted society in the United States since pre-colonial times and traces back to the Puritans and the doctrines laid forth by their strict Christian belief systems.

Therefore, as they are inherently marginalized, they seek other opportunities to exist with one another (Bornstein, 2013). Within LGBTQ+ communities this can be seen in Post-Stonewall Riot life with the rise of houses and balls through the explosion of drag culture as a way of claiming culture and physical space in a time when many people who are LGBTQ+ were homeless, without family support, and facing the height of the AIDS crisis (Stryker, 2008)

Intergenerational Trauma

After further exploration of colonial and post-colonial theories, their impact on power structures and on all marginalized groups is long lasting and pervasive. Some of the most powerful examples include a 2008 case study by Aaron Denham that focuses on a Coeur

D'Alene tribal family, the Si Johns. This family has endured traumas including the Trail of Tears, residential schools, racism, and occupation by Jesuit missionaries who tried to assimilate them into White culture. The focus of Denham's work displays ways the family shared oral histories intergenerationally to foster personal and familial resilience and power. The raw narratives shared include those of family members shot in their own homes, using their final words before public execution to sing a traditional song to their family and remind them to be strong while clutching their culture, mothers giving up their faith communities to preserve their Native American heritage and the notion of holding space for one another as a family unit, regardless of geography.

Resilience is a protective factor touted as a pathway to rewiring neural pathways, increasing health outcomes across the board, and sustaining positive change (Comas-Diaz, L., Luthar S., Maddi S., O'Neill H. K., Saakvitne K., Tedeschi R. n.d.). In terms of working with marginalized communities, the APA touts resilience building as a key factor in supporting empowerment and how people make sense of trauma, personal, historical, and intergenerational. Martin Brokenleg (2012) describes resilience as directly related to traumatic experiences. Brokenleg hypothesizes that trauma and disempowerment are tools of oppressors to maintain power structures while resilience building in communities is a tool for empowerment and progress within the community. Creating systems that feed back into disenfranchised communities requires a great deal of awareness of how trauma manifests interpersonally and within cultural institutions.

Though the notion of intergenerational trauma came about when descendants of Holocaust survivors began seeking psychological interventions at increased rates,

intergenerational trauma traces back to the era of colonial slavery and before (Fossion et al., 2003). Intergenerational trauma has long lasting impacts, potentially into perpetuity, in the marginalized populations it influences. Much of the research presented around intergenerational trauma, such as Coyle's 2014 discussions about trauma focuses on people who are African-American and Indigenous people and posits that European colonization as a vehicle in the quest for wealth, power, and status, is a precipitating factor in a great deal of the imposed trauma. Research explores the nuances between historical and intergenerational trauma and the ways these communities break the cycles of trauma and violence through regaining their power and culture. There are several such theorists who hold these beliefs and focus their studies on diverse groups of people. Many researchers present the notion that intergenerational trauma impacts long term health outcomes; Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, and Tebes (2014) discuss intergenerational trauma as impacting individual and community health outcomes, especially in culturally diverse communities.

Joy DeGruy (2005; as cited by George, 2015) introduced the notion of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome as the direct genetic impact of American slave trade on their African American descendants. DeGruy posits that certain facets of African American culture stem from cultural memories of slave era coping mechanisms. These cultural memories translate into mores such as demeaning children and their abilities, a widespread practice during slavery to make them seem less viable as saleable assets, and cultural hypervigilance, as slaves always had to be aware of their surroundings, with parallels to communities of color today in their relationships with law enforcement. Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome impacted the efficacy of African-American college students in their pursuits of academic success. Womack (2016) discusses how intergenerational trauma infiltrates cultural mores within the African American community as

coping skills that reinforce the negative cultural mores.

Another such theory posits that education is a tool for maintaining hegemonic power over students of color, especially in communities where they comprise a majority of the student population. In 2011, Goodman and West-Olatunji shared that asserting power over students of color in educational settings both contributes to poor outcomes and perpetuates historical trauma and systems of oppression within educational and societal settings. Goodman and West-Olatunji also described solutions for this institutionalized power structure through resilience building with the students. The process includes a three-part model; first the community must acknowledge or understand how the people in power impact their lives, then begin work on deconstructing existing power structures through counseling and education-based interventions, and finally foster transformation through shared narratives of resilience and empowered self-image. This process is replicable many times over to address any issues of oppression within the school community.

LGBTQ+ Ourstory

Existence of LGBTQ+ people can trace as far back as 2450 BCE Egypt. LGBTQ+ history, while vastly under documented, is beginning to have a place in mainstream media through interactive and widely available tools such as the GLSEN interactive timeline website (2018). The tool begins to highlight modern LGBTQ+ history around the 1950s with the advent of early activist organizations such as the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society, community milestones such as the medical transition of Christine Jorgensen and James Baldwin's open investigation of his bisexuality in a book.

Notable examples of items not included in this timeline are the creation and work of the activist group the Lesbian Avengers. These women engaged in the most audacious public activist

displays such as eating fire and showing up to actions with marching bands to further their activist mission to the point that New York City based their protest ordinances around the work of the Lesbian Avengers. Little known facts about the Lesbian Avengers include that they played an integral part of caregiving during the AIDS Crisis.

While many of the items on this timeline are public knowledge in present day, there is so much more information missing due to death, stigma, and lack of a centralized place to preserve this history.

LGBTQ+ History Preservation

Due to the unique nature of how LGBTQ+ history is carried like a cultural mantel with and through the community; the community has relied on grassroots efforts to preserve its history and informal methods of preservation such as oral histories (Flinn, 2011). Throughout these preservation efforts, several practitioners have developed a sense of best practices for archiving queer histories that vary from standard best practices around historic preservation to accommodate the unique needs of the communities (Murphy, Pierce & Ruiz, 2013). In Boyd's 2008 discussion of the intersectionalities of queer theory and oral histories, they express the nuances of things like protecting the identities of those being interviewed, asking for express consent throughout all stages of the process, and the implications of documenting an entire population's history through the oral tradition. Boyd also conveys the keen sense of being respectful of stewarding the stories garnered in their research and fostering intentionality around this mentality.

The AIDS Crisis

The AIDS Crisis began in 1981 and continued in full swing through the advent of modern Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) in 2000. This therapy has made it possible to live with

HIV/AIDS for a typical adult lifespan, with access to the proper medical care. According to the HIV.gov AIDS timeline (2016), half a million people died during the height of the crisis. While not all people who died from AIDS during this time were LGBTQ+. A substantial portion of the decedents did belong to the community, particularly gay men. This is effectively the death of the majority of a generation of gay men.

Research suggests this effective generation chasm created by the AIDS Crisis has fostered a feeling of disconnection and perceived difference within LGBTQ+ communities. Russell and Bohan (2005) suggest that the perceived generation gaps because of the missing generation is too great to bridge and create effective community. This also suggests that creating community engagement opportunities intergenerationally within LGBTQ+ communities is challenging.

Intergenerational LGBTQ+

Intergenerational work is not widely done within LGBTQ+ communities and the potential impact of intergenerational or historical trauma from an LGBTQ+ perspective has not been studied. There have, however, been several studies that discuss the implications of intergenerational work within LGBTQ+ communities. Vaccarro (2015) describes the perceived and actual differences between millennials and baby boomers. The discussion provided compelling reasons to support intergenerational work that there were no actual differences between the two generations and their experiences except each generation's perceived gap caused by the use of technology. While these perceptions are legitimate concerns in terms of immediate connection and common vernacular, the study showed that the similarities in the participants' experiences overlapped in areas of coming out, family acceptance, bullying, and relationships (both intimate and personal).

Dr. Vaccarro also studied microclimates on college campuses in 2012 and the impacts of being first-generation LGBTQ+ college student without any role models who are LGBTQ+ in 2017. During those studies, they found that college age students performed better if they had pro-social LGBTQ+ role models in their lives. Additionally, they showed better indicators of social-emotional wellbeing and improved health outcomes.

When considering the potential impacts on participants in intergenerational work it is of equal importance to consider the impact on the elders and the youth at the same time. In 2018 Robson, Gutman, Marchbank, and Blair studied the impacts of a youth directed campaign to address bullying of LGBTQ+ elders through social and mixed media. A component of the project included the youth and elders working together to identify main factors impacting the ability of the elders to feel safe and supported in their environments. Moreover, the connections with the youth continued with some regularity after the project just because they had such rich connections with each other. It is important to note, however, that it is unclear whether any of the youth in this study were from LGBTQ+ communities.

Intergenerational community building is a crucial need within LGBTQ+ communities because there is a large perceived generation gap. This limits the amounts of intergenerational histories shared within the communities and the protective factors provided by such intermingling. To create space for these communities to bridge these gaps, community engagement professionals can work to hold and create shared third spaces for increased intergenerational dialogues.

Project Plan

An interactive evening of intentional conversation, community togetherness, and creation centered upon LGBTQ+ identities. Topics include how people access their community and cultural histories when they're not taught in mainstream methods, how community spaces emerge, and how we preserve histories as communities. The Green Carnation Initiative came about because I realized that so many LGBTQ+ "elders," a highly subjective term within the community, have important pieces of history stored in boxes in their closets, people are dying every day with their stories and there aren't many folks working to preserve them. Green Carnations, inspired by Oscar Wilde, were one way that gay men knew one another during the Victorian era, I think that's such a poetically beautiful and hopeful image.

In executing this project, the aspiration is that it will become a catalyst for a greater sense of community engagement and interconnectedness, intergenerationally within the LGBTQ+ community. A measure of success will be if the participants attend and whether they report a greater sense of community after the workshop. This is determined through formal and informal assessments of the workshop experience with surveys and interpretation of the notes provided by participants.

During and after implementation of the program, I suspect that participants will build community, feel connected to one another, and gain a greater sense of their cultural context. I hope that the participants will feel empowered and compelled to lean in to the potentially difficult or awkward feelings.

Situation Statement

This project hopes to address the lack of truly accessible space for the LGBTQ+ community, especially those who are youth and elders. Due to the AIDS Crisis, elders within the

LGBTQ+ community do not adhere to the typical notions of elders. While there are lesser

amounts of large research studies on LGBTQ+ communities there have only been small,

grassroots efforts to focus on intergenerational dialogue with these communities.

The project will focus a workshop, The Green Carnation Initiative, on the tensions and

complexities related to intergenerational work and LGBTQ+ communities. The prospective

workshop will culminate in opportunities for preservation of oral histories for digital archiving

and community connection and engagement in a low risk setting where people gain the tools to

connect in organic ways.

Defined Goals

- Provision of opportunities in low-risk, controlled environments, to connect LGBTQ+
  youth with LGBTQ+ elders, and vice versa

- Tangible sharing of LGBTQ+ histories and culture as a way of creating and preserving
  intergenerational Third Space

- Provide a forum for intergenerational LGBTQ+ communities to organize around issues
  facing the various constituencies

- Provide LGBTQ+ communities with the historical contexts that influence their current
  experiences and lives

Target Audience and Stakeholders

The target audiences of this project are people who are LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+ adjacent,

such as friends, family members, and significant others, from the New England. Within

LGBTQ+ communities, primarily because of the AIDS epidemic, the definition of "elder" varies

widely and will remain subjective for the purposes of this project. Another target audience is an

online constituency of service users seeking access to LGBTQ+ history within mainstream media outlets.

The stakeholders of this project, in addition to the target audiences and their stake, are the greater LGBTQ+ community, members of the public with personal stake in the preservation and history of LGBTQ+ communities, The Pike School as a community partner for this event, and potentially Queer Studies scholars. These are the stakeholders because they are investing the time, emotional and physical labor, and effort into participating in the workshop and project.

Crafting a Clear Message

Exploration of LGBTQ+ communities and opportunities to connect intergenerationally nets few results in terms of accessible space for all that designated as solely for people who are LGBTQ+. From Stonewall to Obergefell v. Hodges the LGBTQ+ community has made great strides in the past fifty years, though much of this history is only documented in the stories of those who lived it. The key to combating intergenerational trauma is providing space for population subsets to connect and share the triumphs and trials that contribute to their existence in a vibrant, deeply cultured community of people who are just like them.

Incentives for Engagement

Stakeholder: LGBTQ+ Youth

Incentive: Opportunities to connect with people who belong to their communities who have lived in a different time but had similar life experiences

Stakeholder: LGBTQ+ Elders

Incentive: Opportunities to connect with people who belong to their communities who have lived in a different time but had similar life experiences

Stakeholder: The Greater LGBTQ+ Community and the allied public

Incentive: Preservation of important historical context and the creation of meaningful intergenerational connections that break down barriers to community building.

Stakeholder: Queer Studies Scholars

Incentive: A basis to pursue further research into intergenerational work when much of the community focus is on risk factors, health, and safety.

Outreach Methods

To support the most effective outreach and reaching the best variety of the target audience, a variety of outreach methods are necessary to project success.

- Paper Advertisement

  - Council on Aging publications

  - Flyers and promotional information at local LGBTQ+ meetings, allied places of worship, and other community gathering spaces

  - Letters to local groups

- Electronic Advertisement

  - Posting on social media websites, including Boston area LGBTQ+ groups

  - Promotion through The Pike School social media pages including Instagram and Facebook, website, and weekly email blast "The Hub"

  - Emails to several listservs that are community institutions

  - Emails to local Councils on Aging, and programs such as SAGE

- In Person Networking

  - Attendance at community meetings (the -AGLY network, FTM Compass, Welcoming Faiths, GBPFLAG, et cetera)

o   Attendance (with prior arrangement) at local college and university LGBTQ+

groups or during office hours at diversity centers

o   Attendance at local conferences including the First Event Conference

Responsibilities Chart

Name	Role	Contact	Responsibility
Shaun Connors	Capstone Facilitator	connorss@merrimack.edu	Primary facilitator and coordinator of the project; responsible for "stage managing" the culmination of the project
Dr. Melissa Nemon	Capstone Advisor	nemonm@merrimack.edu	Support the capstone facilitator in the capstone project and its completion
Lilli Shaffer	Workshop Facilitator	lillishaffer@gmail.com	Provide resources and support related to LGBTQ+ elders and their perspectives
Michael Eatman	Director of Community Life, The Pike School	mleatman@pikeschool.org	Serve as primary support and logistical coordinator within The Pike School
Lori Goldenberg	Social Connector: Elders	lgoldenberg@pikeschool.org	Serve as a social influencer for connecting with LGBTQ+ elders and their networks, and local LGBTQ+ networks
Jack Patrick Lewis	Social Connector	Jack.Lewis@mahouse.gov	Provide connection to social networks and supports related to the greater MA LGBTQ+ communities

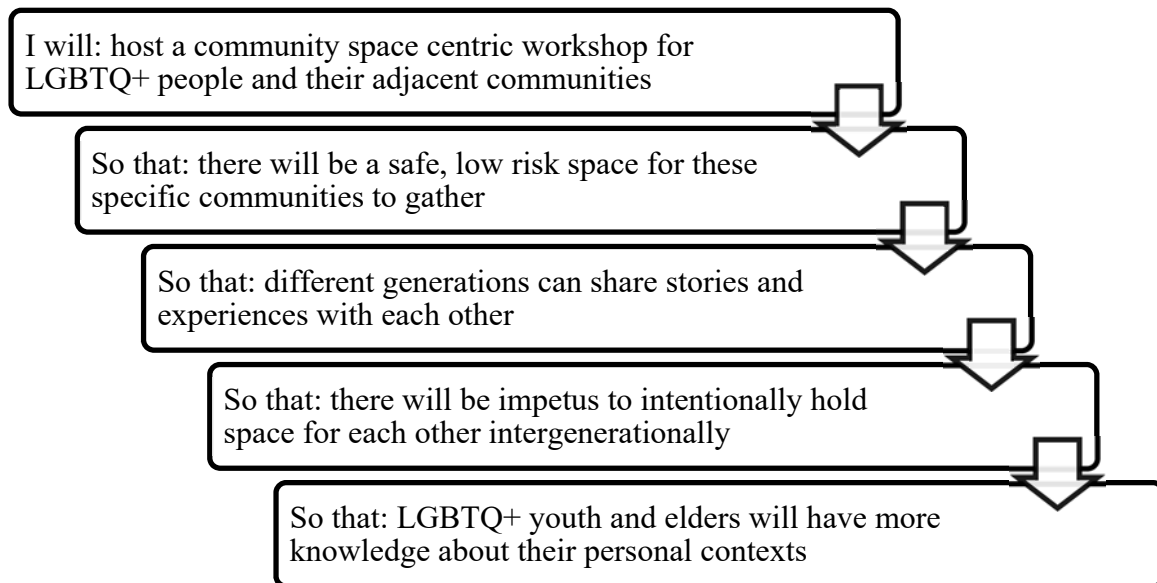*Tools and Measures to Assess Progress*

All workshop participants will complete a post- event survey to determine their sense of

community and historical context. Participants will also complete several written activities

throughout the workshop to elicit passive data collection. These additional notes and information

shared by participants will inform workshop efficacy and contribute to a compendium of

resources and recommendations for future iterations of the workshop.

Implementation Timeline

January 2019	- Finalize location, date, and time of workshop - Solicit donations from food vendors - Develop & disseminate marketing materials - Finalize collaboration with local LGBTQ+ organization
February 2019	- Develop surveys - Hold a planning meeting of workshop facilitators & stakeholders - Continue recruitment of participants (started in 2018)
March 2019	- Hold the workshop - Compile data - Analyze data - Edit oral histories for sound quality - Send thank you notes to partners
April 2019	- Evaluate data - Make changes and notes on workshop plan for future implementation
May 2019	- Present project and findings - Complete capstone and submit for final approval

Logical Framework

I will: host a community space centric workshop for LGBTQ+ people and their adjacent communities

So that: there will be a safe, low risk space for these specific communities to gather

So that: different generations can share stories and experiences with each other

So that: there will be impetus to intentionally hold space for each other intergenerationally

So that: LGBTQ+ youth and elders will have more knowledge about their personal contexts

Implementation Notes

Along with the planning committee, managing the people involved in running and participating in the workshop, and securing the venue, there is a need to establish a safety plan. An integral part of safety planning includes paying attention to whether police contact is necessary during an emergency; if so, processes should be implemented to avoid law enforcement if possible. Additionally, continued effort in all areas of planning to account for the socioeconomic statuses of both seniors and youth and the potential for prohibitive travel costs and lack of access to technology for those participants.

Methodology

The Green Carnation Initiative is being held at The Pike School in Andover, Massachusetts. This interactive workshop provides opportunities for people who are LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+ adjacent, namely family members, friends, and significant others, to engage in a cultural third space where they learn about LGBTQ+ narratives, history, and culture.

Participants

The Pike School in Andover, MA is an independent Pre-K through 9th grade day school. The Green Carnation Workshop participants, while open to the public, are garnered from the LGBTQ+ communities and those directly related to them within Pike and the greater Andover Community's catchment area. Other community partners include the Andover Public High School Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), the Phillips Academy GSA, South Church Andover, Christ Church United, Lowell, and ABC Andover's "Difficult conversations" series. Participants are all aged 13 and above. They include people who are LGBTQ+, their friends, families, significant

others, and children. Potential other participants include anyone questioning their gender and

sexuality.

Materials

To hold the workshop, several stations had art materials such as lined paper, pens,

coloring utensils, a set of LGBTQ+ "trading card" visuals, a recording of Harvey Milk's "In case

of assassination," speech, Twizzlers candy in the colors of the rainbow flag, images of the

rainbow flag with the meaning of each color printed on them, index cards, post-it notes, butcher

paper, and evaluation forms on laptop computers and/or Chromebooks. The analysis of the

information was documented by photographing the written feedback of the participants during

three of the sensory stations and through digital analysis of the post-event evaluation forms.

Procedure

It was determined we would use the library at the Pike School in Andover to hold the

event. I went over layout possibilities and the potential for things like having food at the event

with the librarian. There was immediate outreach to both the internet technology department to

ask about technical logistics and their capabilities in that space, including use of Chromebooks to

administer the post event assessment and the external affairs department to obtain a press style

guide and set up a marketing plan meeting.

A few days after determining the date, I met with dining services to go over potential for

food and how many people RSVP'd or showed interest and what our budget was. Based on

initial response to the RSVP form and the potential of the explored networks, we requested food

for thirty to forty people including a coffee service, cold sandwich bar, and cookie trays. I also

began to work with other key constituents at the school to arrange for things like extra cleaning

of the library that day, getting the event listed on the school's marquee, and coordinating with the

afterschool program to make sure the facilities team had enough time to set up in the library the day of the event. The library was set up in 6 distinct areas (Appendix A), people entered and signed in, including filling out nametags and their pronouns.

This project seeks to hold space for those who may not have access to it elsewhere, therefore intentional opportunities for casual data collection in addition to post event evaluation are important. During the first half of the event, participants were able to engage each of their five senses except for smell, which was replaced with feeling, and touch, which was replaced with knowledge. During each of these activities, participants had to reflect in small groups on each of the sensory stations (see Appendix A and Appendix B). Worksheets and papers that participants wrote on were collected and photo-documented. The workshop originally planned to have a second half activity that consisted of participants working in different small groups to each create a page for a zine about LGBTQ+ history. The discussion in the first half with the sensory stations the discussion and engagement presented so strongly that I determined that those connections were more important than getting to the second half activity.

While two of the groups did have time to begin the zine activity, most participants were unable to begin the process. Had there been enough time to complete the zine activity, the pages would have been documented and analyzed for qualitative data with the rest of the activities and then distributed to participants who wanted it and finally the zine would be archived through a partnership with the Sexual Minorities Archive in Western Massachusetts. Evaluations were collected by using Chromebooks and google forms. While paper surveys were available, all participants chose to use the Chromebooks to complete the survey.

Findings

There were sixteen participants in attendance at The Green Carnation Initiative Workshop, one person could only stay for the opening and first rotation of the sensory activities and therefore they did not complete an evaluation form. Thirty-three people formally RSVP'd via Facebook, email, or the Google form sent out.

Demographics

When asked to categorize themselves by race, given the opportunity to mark as many boxes as were applicable using the options, 66% (n=10) of the participants self-identified solely as Caucasian/White, the remaining 34% of participants each identified as something different. Giving 6.8%, 1 participant each, to the following remaining racial categorizations: African American/Black, Caucasian/White American Indian/Alaska Native, Caucasian/White American Indian/Alaska Native Other/Not Listed, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish Origin, and Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Spanish Origin African American/Black.

Figure 1: Participants by Race
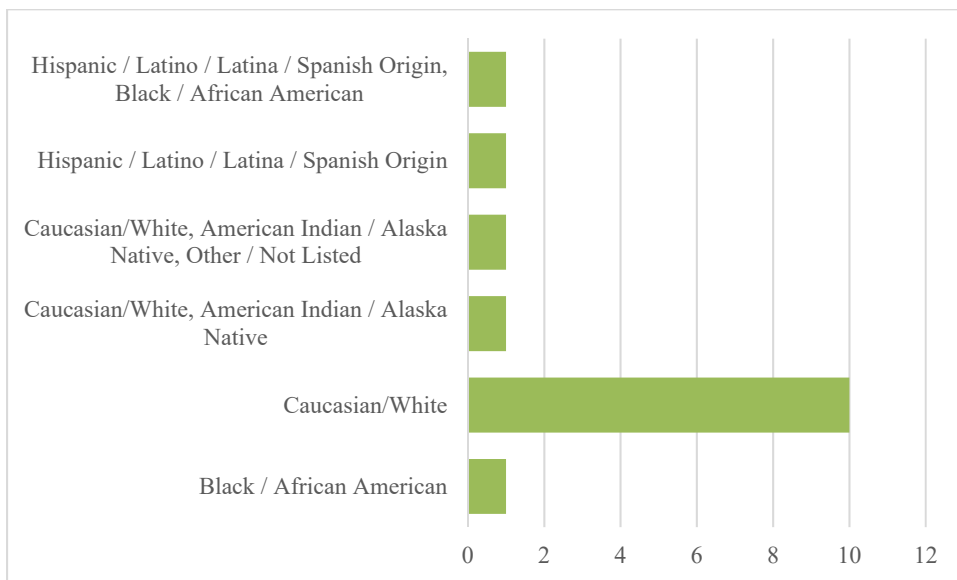
Participant ages fleshed out every category provided in a well distributed fashion. The age ranges 15-24, 35-44, and 45-54 each had three respondents while the age ranges 25-34, 55-64, and 65 and older each had two respondents.

*Figure 2: Participants by Age Range*
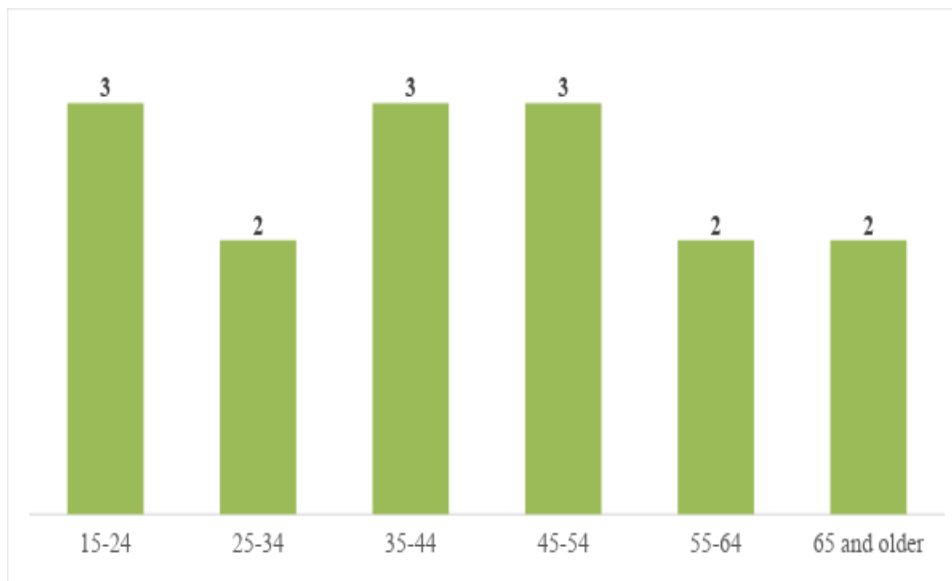
Participants were asked, in an open-ended format, how they would describe their gender. The responses included one omission, four responses of "female," one response of "cis female," one response of "cis," two responses of "male", one response of "traditional," one response of "straight," one response of "trans guy," one response of "transgender female," one response of "female/questioning," and one response of "female/human ;)." Female was the most popular identifier used to describe participants, followed by male, cis, trans or some variation thereof.

Participants were asked to identify how they were related to LGBTQ+ communities and given the opportunity to mark as many boxes as applicable with the options LGBTQ+, Ally, Family Member of LGBTQ+, and Person Who is Questioning. Eight of the participants self-identified as LGBTQ+, one participant labeled themself an ally, three participants labeled

themselves solely family members of LGBTQ+, and three participants labeled themselves family

members of LGBTQ+ and allies.

Figure 3: Participant Connection to LGBTQ+ Communities
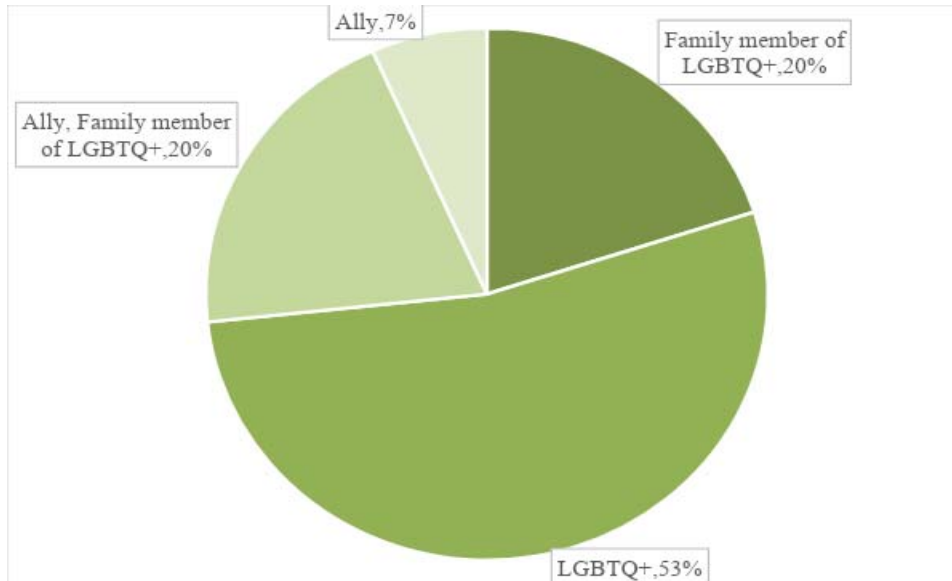

Survey Response Questions

When asked to rate the workshop on a four-point scale of Excellent (4), Good (3), Fair

(2), and Poor (1), fifteen out of fifteen respondents rated the workshop excellent.

On the post event survey, there were eight questions that participants could rate on a four-

point scale ranging from 1 to 4. For the first six of these questions, Q2-Q7, 1 represented

strongly agree and 4 represented strongly disagree; for the final two questions, Q8-Q9, 1

represented greatly impacted and 4 represented not at all impacted. Three separate people did

not respond to three different questions during this portion of the survey, those questions were

This workshop made me think about how I access my community/ies (Q4), I would like to attend

similar workshops about LGBTQ+ Communities in the future (Q6), and This workshop has

inspired me to find new ways to work with LGBTQ+ Communities (Q7). All fifteen participants

responded to I learned something new about LGBTQ+ Communities at this workshop (Q2), I

experienced a sense of belonging or community at this workshop (Q3), and This workshop made me think about how I learn/ed history (Q5).

In response to questions two through seven, most participants indicated positive or strong positive agreement of the statements related to the workshop. Collectively 85% of the responses indicated strongly agree or agree. The most agreed upon questions are question five and question two, with eleven out of thirteen strongly agree responses and thirteen out of fifteen responses at least agree.

Figure 4: Reflections on the Workshop
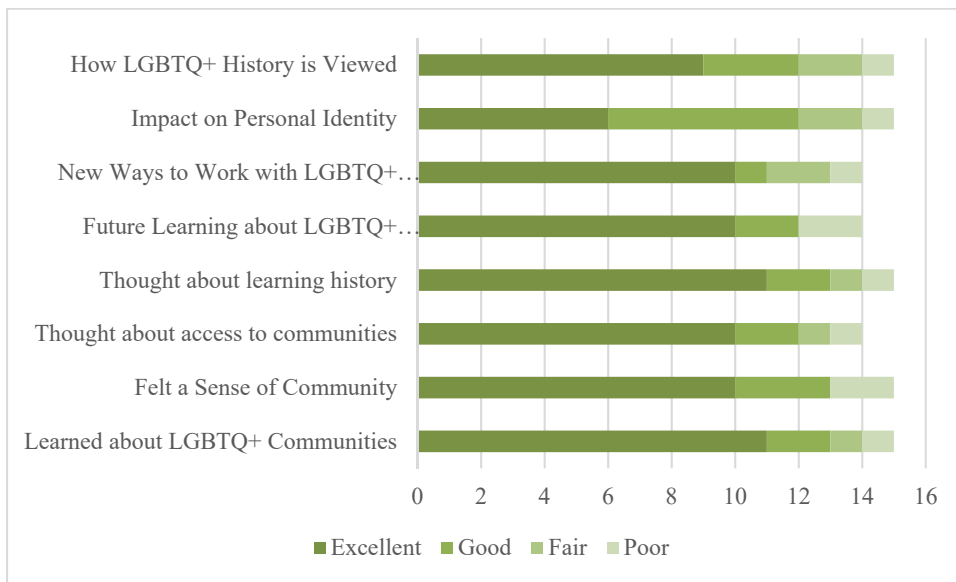
Questions eight and nine showed positively skewed results with 50% of responses indicating strong impact, 30% indicating positive impact, 13% indicating some impact, and 7% indicating no impact.

Sensory Activity Analysis

Of the five sensory activities, three of them, taste, knowledge, and listening, netted written interactive responses for data collection. These responses were analyzed for reoccurring themes and topics for further exploration. The knowledge activity required more analysis than

the other three because it involved the participants drawing pictures instead of just written responses.

The taste activity netted fifteen responses for which rainbow flag color's meaning was most impactful to them. Of those fifteen respondents, six indicated more than one color was personally meaningful. The most reported color impact was orange/healing with ten of the fifteen participants indicating its personal significance. Of the participants who indicated more than one color, 100% of those indicated orange as one of their impactful colors, of the remaining nine respondents, four indicated orange as the most impactful, and of the remaining five, two indicated blue/serenity and one each indicated red/life, purple/spirit, and yellow/sunlight. Common rationale for choosing orange/healing includes things like the LGBTQ+ communities gaining more rights and acceptance, media presence, and being among "queer" community. The respondent who indicated yellow/sunlight was their most impactful said "part of being visible in and out of the community is to be out in the sunlight, living fully & bringing others into the light."

Figure 5: Reflections on Sensory Stations
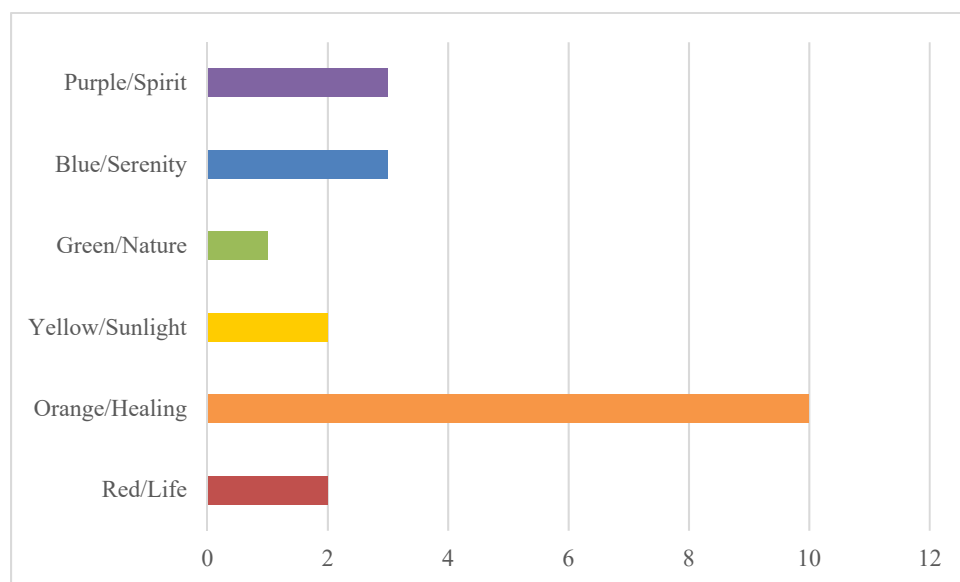
The feelings and intentions activity asked participants to draw, discuss, and write various questions on table coverings. They were separated by group, so each group's responses were separate, though no participant indicated their identity on the table coverings. Common themes gleaned from this activity were connection, service/support, community/family, and identity. Eight out of fifteen participants indicated some sense of wanting to be of service or support to people who are LGBTQ+ including topics such as being an activist, approaching a local school board to have health class curriculum changed, and learning more to support students a participant teaches. Eight out of fifteen participants indicated a sense of family or community connection to people who are LGBTQ+ including things like one participant indicating "combating loneliness" in community as response to their purpose for attending the workshop and one drawing a picture of people together holding hands, writing "family" underneath. Six participants indicated seeking or feeling greater connection in several ways through this activity including those who drew pictures of people holding hands around an image of the globe and one participant who traced their hand holding another hand and wrote "togetherness" inside them. Four participants indicated something to do with their identity including things like a nurse's hat, cultural items like the French and Canadian flags, and two participants in separate groups who drew music notes on a staff.

For the listening activity, participants were asked to write one thought or hope for the future or a response to what they had learned. This activity is centered on Harvey Milk, his activism, and his assassination. One participant chose not to participate in this activity, while the other fourteen responses netted themes of action, hope, and personal cost. Nine of the fourteen indicated they would focus on action including phrases like "fight like hell regardless of what obstacles are in the way," "fight and hope," and "don't stop never stop." Seven participants

indicated that personal cost was important or impactful from this activity including discussion of coming out on a regular basis, being a pioneer in community (i.e. Harvey Milk sensory station, see Appendix B), and showing up for one another.

When asked to share their top three takeaways from the workshop, participants showed three common themes in their responses. Those themes emerged as history, connection, and learning. 40% of respondents indicated all three of these themes in their personal takeaways. Overall, one participant's answers did not include any of these three themes, twelve of the respondents overall indicated themes of connection including discussion of community, community engagement, and being "openminded in our thoughts, views, and actions." Ten participants indicated history as a direct takeaway of their experience, within the theme of history participants indicated history of activists/activism, connections to Nazi Germany, and knowledge of LGBTQ+ community histories. Finally, nine of the participants indicated that learning was a key takeaway for them. Their language included frequent use of the words learned, indications of a sense of understanding or knowledge, and increase of awareness around LGBTQ+ communities.

Finally, when asked about things to improve future iterations of the workshop two major themes emerged from participants' time and groups. Twelve of the participants indicated they wanted more than the two hours to engage with the sensory stations. Five of the participants indicated they wanted more opportunities to work in different groups or foster deeper connection within their groups.

Discussion

This project set out to create community, foster learning about LGBTQ+ histories, and increase awareness around LGBTQ+ communities. The data suggests the workshop was successful for attendees. Findings suggest that the key themes of learning, history, and connection along with indicated positive impacts from the participants agree with the ethos of the project. While the attendance was low, compared to the RSVPs and the expectation, I feel that the results were so resoundingly positive that it is safe to say that the data would scale up similarly.

The strikingly positive impact of the sensory stations in the workshop was an unexpected outcome of the project. It was likely so impactful because most people can relate on a very basic level to their senses and feel comfortable talking about them in an honest, unguarded manner. In the future I would be interested to see how the order of stations impacts how people respond to or engage with the stations. Additionally, it is likely that as people became more comfortable in their groups, they engaged more deeply with the content. The first station for each group stuck mostly to the time limit of six minutes, while the remaining four stations took increasingly more time. The participants likely found themselves engaged in a cultural third space without even realizing it. They started to share things in increasingly critical and thoughtful ways and take longer at each station they moved to, regardless of which it was. They began to ask questions and build upon information shared in other stations.

Over the course of this project and its implementation, people responding with resounding support and interest for it. There seems to be a great desire for projects like this within LGBTQ+ and adjacent communities and it would be remiss to underestimate their value. Something striking I noticed about information gathered in research and the outcomes of the

workshop is that while I did not tell the participants about the cultural third space until the end, they absolutely reported the markers of the cultural third space. It was interesting, in part, because the participants did not all belong to the same cultural group.

While the full impact and implications of this workshop will come out of what the communities do with the information next, it is crucial to note that all participants expressed that this was a worthwhile use of their time. To me, that speaks volumes especially on a Tuesday night in one of the busiest months of the year for several industries. The workshop was effective and there is traction for more workshops and information sharing opportunities like this in the future. The next step for The Green Carnation Initiative is seeking to create cultural third spaces for LGBTQ+ and adjacent individuals while building a coalition of people who are similarly seeking spaces to learn about these rich cultural histories.

Limitations

There are several things that limited the project and its implementation. I believe that in the future, I would make the project an entire day or hold it as a series of events instead of just one workshop. There was not enough time to undertake the zine making in earnest, which was personally disappointing. In terms of the workshop itself, particularly the sensory experiences and the groups. I would want a way to track the participants better, so having the same group sorted by a certain color or symbol would help data analysis for things like comparing the surveys to the sensory activity data. I would be very interested to see if this workshop could be different if held solely for or with LGBTQ+ communities, or solely with allied communities.

Discerning the location for this event proved one of the most difficult tasks of this process. After having three community partners fall through or otherwise be unable to contribute providing a location for the event, it came to be one day that my graduate fellowship site asked

how my capstone project was going. Upon sharing the struggles encountered, my supervisor

offered to hold it at Pike. We spent the rest of the day discerning a date, space, obtaining

approval from the capstone advisor, and contacting potential community partners in Pike's

network.

In terms of the information used in the information used in the sensory activities, I think

it is important to try and tailor the information shared and centered to the demographics of the

community. During the Vision activity one participant who could only stay for that one station

noticed that there were no Asian people included in the trading cards, that person happened to be

Asian. I think it is important to be aware of the community being worked with and create a

varied but community centric version of the workshop to make it more impactful.

Implications for Future Projects

This project absolutely needs to be improved upon, implemented again, and reassessed.

In the future it should be held in community spaces with only LGBTQ+ participants and in

separate spaces with only LGBTQ+ allied people. During the future iterations of the project,

participants' experiences should be curated in such a way that influences their interactions with

the sensory stations further. An example would be to put the Listen station at the end or in the

beginning for all groups instead of the rotational model set forth in Appendix A. Additionally,

there should be larger scale research into what the correlation with the theme of "healing" has to

do with who is present at the workshop or what it could mean for future iterations of the

workshop or other projects.

One organization has already requested the workshop to be brought to their

constituencies, I believe this proves it has powerful impact and the ability for use in other

venues. Eventually, with some tweaking for developmental differences, I think the project could

easily be implemented in schools or with other groups that people may not traditionally think of as seeking this information. I also think it could be applied differently for other historically excluded groups and bridging gaps between mainstream society and their cultures in a way that draws parallels and highlights the richness of those cultures.

The next logical step in research related to this project is an assessment of how LGBTQ+ histories are being taught in primary and secondary schools, the institutional archiving and documentation of LGBTQ+ histories, and exploration of the meanings described in the Taste activity. I think there is definitely something more to the theme of healing and what it means to LGBTQ+ and adjacent communities. In the future, I think there are also opportunities to do a large-scale project documenting history by and of LGBTQ+ communities.

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Appendix A

Library set-up and workshop flow

The Green Carnation Initiative
Room Setup; The Pike School Library
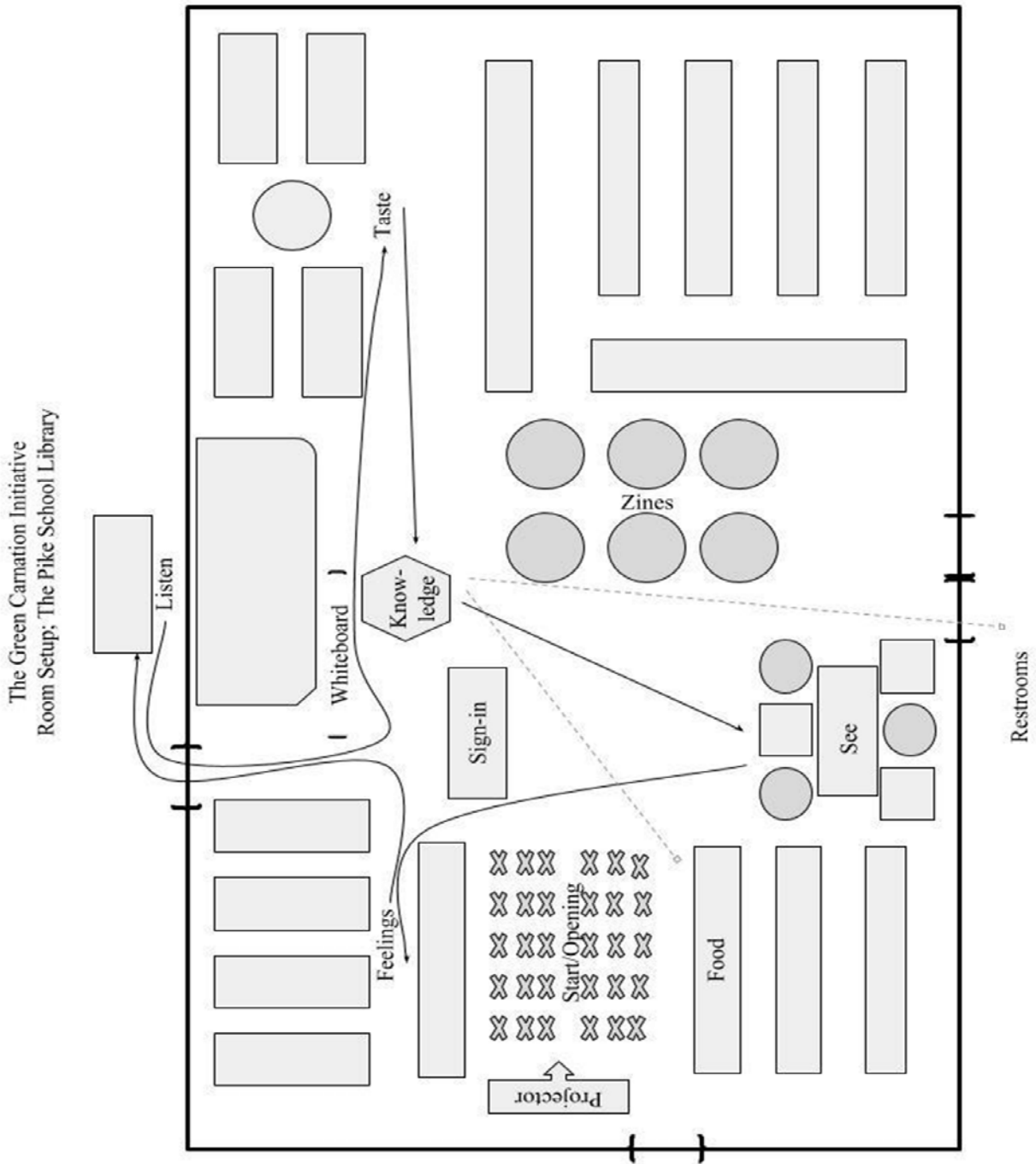
Appendix B

Sensory station directions and prompts.

GROUND RULES

"One Diva, One Mic:" One person talking at a time

Challenge by Choice: Lean in and if you're quiet speak more, if you're talkative speak less.

It's Vegas: Things might get personal, let's keep our discussions here.

It's ALL about ME: Speak from your own personal experiences

Ouch! Oops: We're here to learn, if someone makes a mistake or is hurtful remember to say "ouch" and if someone says that to you, let's apologize and ask how we can make things okay.

TASTE

At this station you're literally going to "Taste the Rainbow" and eat your way through the colors of the rainbow flag, which is traditionally known as the LGBTQ+ Community's flag, while learning about the story behind it.

- Grab a bag of twizzlers and a rainbow flag
- As you're reading about the history of the rainbow flag, think about the different colors and their meanings and the flavors you might associate with each color (for example, when I see a black piece of candy, I think it's going to be black licorice flavored)
- Write on an index card which flavor/color means the most to you and why. Please place it in the basket.
- If you have time, chat with your groupmates about your feelings or thoughts.

SOUND

- Listen to this short clip recorded by Harvey Milk (clip information at bottom of directions)
- Look on the colorful sheet that's face down on your table for information about why he recorded this clip and how it became public
- Reflect, on your own or in your group, about what it would mean to record a message like this and what you would say.
- On a post-it note, write or draw one thing that you would want to share, place it on the large whiteboard on the way to your next activity.

VISION

Here you'll explore which figures in LGBTQ+ history you're drawn to, why, and how it influences what you know about these communities!

- Take some time to go through the trading cards on these tables
- Is any group missing from this set of cards?
- Are certain sets of people more or less visible than others?
- Which card (top 3 if you can't decide!) is your favorite and why?
- Do you share any similarities with the card(s) you liked?
- Why do you think these historic figures are important?

(For a copy of the trading cards please contact me at connorss@merrimack.edu)

KNOWLEDGE

- Please write a question you have about LGBTQ+ communities, histories, or current events on a post-it note and place it on the table somewhere.
    o You can do more than one but please only use one per paper
- If you don't have a question, please share some knowledge and write a fact on the paper.
- This is a great time to use the restroom, grab some food, or browse the books our Librarian set out for this event! (around the base of this table)

FEELINGS & INTENTIONS

On the paper covering these tables please draw or write (one of) the following:

- Something you hope to take away from this event
- A feeling you're having
- Your favorite subject in school
- My purpose is…?

SOUND CLIP INFORMATION

Harvey Milk recorded this message with the distinct knowledge that it was likely he would be assassinated. In 1977 he ran for a Supervisor position on the Board of City Supervisors of San Francisco and won. He was assassinated in 1978 by another Supervisor.

Questions to help your discussion:
- Would you run for office if you knew you were likely facing assassination?
- How do you think people reacted to his death upon hearing this message?
- What sorts of knowledge would you impart to people in your community/ies if you were making such a choice?

The final line, not included in our clip, is "*I urge them to do that, urge them to come out. Only that way will we start to achieve our rights. … All I ask is for the movement to continue, and if a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door…*"

Do you think Milk's death spurred the movement in this way?

(please flip this back over before you leave the station, so it's set up for the other group)

Appendix C

Zine prompts and directions.

<p align="center">Above all remember process NOT product!</p>

A few guidelines:

- You can use one or both sides of your sheet of paper

- Please keep content PG-13

- Please keep content LGBTQ+ community related

<u>If you would like a copy of the zine, please fill out the information sheet at the sign-in table</u>

Some ideas to help you begin:

- You're in charge of your page.

- You could write a poem or story

- You can draw a person or scene you're particularly passionate about or connected to

- You can write down a whole page of questions

<p align="center">There are LGBTQ+ history coloring pages around if you can't think of anything to start from or want some additional inspiration.</p>

What's a zine?

Wikipedia says: A zine is a small-circulation self-published work of original or appropriated texts and images, usually reproduced via photocopier. Zines are either the product of a single person, or of a very small group and are popularly photocopied into physical prints.

What do zines have to do with LGBTQ+ Communities?

Zines have given a self-empowering way for people who are marginalized to self-publish opinions and words through print form and provide an outlet for an audience that may not have a form of refuge otherwise. Because of this, zines have traditionally been used by these communities to communicate with one another and/or document histories in an accurate, culturally relevant and competent way.

There are some examples of older zines created by and for LGBTQ+ communities on your tables, feel free to swap them with other tables and collaborate to see all of the information.

Each of you will make a page to include in our zine, which the Sexual Minorities Archive has generously offered to house in its collection. Feel free to include your name on your page if you desire, it is not required. If you want to create a page that you feel uncomfortable to include in the zine for whatever reason, please let me know!

They are power, history, and creative outlet all in one.

Questions to help you brainstorm or think about your page or to spark discussion at your tables:
- What's a moment in LGBTQ+ history you remember living through? What did it feel like? How did you feel? Why?
- Are there things you are upset you didn't learn about LGBTQ+ communities? Why? How would you change this?
- Is there someone from LGBTQ+ history whose story speaks to your experience or heart?
- Has anything we talked about tonight challenged your beliefs, feelings, or knowledge?
- What do you want to know more about?
- What struck you about the meanings of the colors on the rainbow flag? Which color did you most connect with?
- What was missing here?
- What do we need to discuss more?
- How can we hold space for each other?
- What are some places you've felt most comfortable?