

Appendix to Safe Zone workshop

A)

The Heterosexual Questionnaire – Consciousness raising.

The following are examples of the types of questions the GLBT community has been asked in the past and is still being asked today. We have reversed the audience of the questions to put the heterosexual community in question.

Your Favorite Questions about the World of Practicing Heterosexuals

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. Isn't it possible that all you need is a good Gay lover?
9. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
10. Your heterosexuality doesn't offend me as long as you don't try to force it on me. Why do you people feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual orientation?
11. If you choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?
13. Why do you insist on being so obvious, and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
14. How can you ever hope to become a whole person if you limit yourself to a compulsive, exclusive heterosexual object choice and remain unwilling to explore and develop your normal, natural, healthy, God-given homosexual potential?
16. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
17. With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
18. How could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual, considering the menace of overpopulation?
19. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed with which you might be able to change if you really want to. Have you considered aversion therapy?
20. Do heterosexuals hate and/or distrust others of their own sex? Is that what makes them heterosexual?

B).

Strategies for Supporting Gay and Lesbian Trainees and Volunteers: a message from P.C. Washington

Trainees and Volunteers must understand there are limitations to support and they are expected to adjust to conditions outside of the office. However, they will need knowledge and tools to do so and the following point will help orient staff about how to support GLB Volunteers.

Staff should also understand that all Trainees arrive with expectations for support, including GLB Volunteers. It is likely they have already been in contact with current or ex-volunteers who may or may not provide a positive view of staff support measures. Staff credibility will be undermined if they are not prepared.

- ***The Peace Corps Office and the Training Center should be safe havens where all gay Volunteers can be out and feel safe and accepted.*** Staff may feel uncomfortable about this for a while but will get used to it and some may even decide to “come out of the closet.” Stranger things have happened.
- ***It is OK for staff to feel uncomfortable. It is not OK to ignore a situation or Volunteer support needs.*** It is better to admit you are uncomfortable and then offer to connect the Trainee or Volunteer to a staff member who is comfortable talking about gay issues, concerns, culture or contributions. With time, it becomes easier once you have confronted your fears and feel less threatened.
- ***Peace Corps Staff and Trainees should receive diversity training and specifically they should receive some training on gay culture. It is very important for staff to understand why they are homophobic or why they are uncomfortable (understand your own culture in order to be able to understand another). Gay people and gay cultures exist in every part of the world, though it may not be recognized as a distinct culture from the heterosexual norm, and it may not be overtly accepted or approved of. People may also interpret what is actually gay behavior differently from one culture to another. It is common, for instance in Latin America, for two men to be engaged in a sexual act but only one of them is considered gay. This is a widely accepted norm though not interpreted the same way from U.S. standards. A Traditional Culture is not necessarily a conservative culture. American staff should not assume HCN staff cannot address, would not address or don't know how to address gay culture from their own cultural perspective or that they couldn't understand and empathize with gay Trainees and Volunteers.***
- ***Inclusive Language should be used in Training and in Language classes. For example, the terms “gay” and “lesbian” should be clearly mentioned when discussing diversity, when welcoming all Volunteers to Training during intro sections, and in Language classes, facilitators can be coached/trained to ask, “do***

you have a boyfriend, girlfriend or partner?” when discussing family in language classes.

- ***Cross Culture, Safety and Security and Health sessions should clearly address gay/lesbian information about local customs, dating, beliefs, etc. This will help them to be safe, healthy and productive. This information should come from a variety of sources including gay people in the host country, gay organizations in the host country and gay volunteers.***
- *Confidentiality outside of the Peace Corps office and Training Center should be addressed.*
- *GLB Volunteers may want contact information for the local gay organization in the capital so they can talk with gay people. This will help them to get unbiased information about gay culture in the host country. That way they will know how to behave and thus be able to keep safe.*
- *GLB Volunteers may or may not want to form a formal gay/lesbian support group. A Staff member should be liaison to this group.*
- *GLB Support does not belong in the Medical Office any more than other kinds of support. Just because a Volunteer is gay or lesbian doesn't mean they need counseling. **All staff should be prepared to address support needs of GLB Volunteers.***
- *They may want to write articles in the Volunteer Newsletter to encourage other gay/lesbian volunteers to come to a meeting or to further educate Volunteers and Staff about GLB issues.*
- ***PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT – it is OK to make mistakes! Be honest and brave.***

C)

LGBT vocabulary Game.

Ally - a person who supports and honors sexual diversity, acts accordingly to challenge homophobic and heterosexist remarks and behaviors, and is willing to explore and understand these forms of bias within him or herself.

Bisexual - a person who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and relationally attracted to both men and women though not necessarily simultaneously.

Closet - being “in the closet” means keeping your sexual orientation a secret. Many LGBT people remain in the closet because of fear of rejection, harassment, and anti-gay violence, but like an actual physical closet, many LGBT people find that this mental closet is an isolated, confining place.

Coming Out - the developmental process in which a person acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates his/her sexual orientation. Coming out is a lifelong process, starting with coming out to oneself and then to others.

Gay Male - a man who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and relationally attracted to other men.

Gender - a sociological construct defining the collection of characteristics that are culturally associated with maleness or femaleness; gender is to “masculine” and “feminine” as sex is to “male” and “female.”

Gender Identity - has to do with whether a person perceives him/herself to be a man or a woman; research indicates that gender identity is typically established by 3 years of age.

Gender Role - the norms of expected behavior for men and women assigned primarily on the basis of biological sex; a sociological construct which varies from culture to culture.

Heterocentrism - the assumption that everyone is heterosexual unless otherwise indicated.

Heterosexism - the individual, group, or institutional norms and behaviors that result from the assumption that all people are heterosexual. This system of oppression, which assumes that heterosexuality is inherently normal and superior, negates LGBT peoples’ lives and relation-ships.

Lesbian—a woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually, affectionately, and relationally attracted to other women.

LGBT – acronym standing for: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

Outing—exposing someone’s sexual orientation to others, usually without their permission.

Queer—term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual—includes lesbians, gay men, bisexual people, and transgendered people. For many LGBT people, the word “queer” has a negative connotation and provokes discomfort; however, many younger gay people are comfortable using the term and have “reclaimed” it.

Homosexual & Gay—a person who is primarily or exclusively attracted to people of the same sex.

Sexuality—the complex range of components that make us sexual beings; includes emotional, physical, and sexual aspects, as well as self-identification (including sexual orientation and gender), behavioral preferences and practices, fantasies, and feelings of affection and emotional affinity.

Sexual Orientation—an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, affectional, and relational attraction to another person. Can involve fantasy, behavior, and self-identification; a person’s general makeup or alignment in terms of partner attraction. May be same a same-sex orientation, male-female orientation, or a bisexual orientation.

Sexual Preference—what a person likes or prefers to do sexually; a conscious recognition or choice not to be confused with sexual orientation.

Homophobia—the fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who love and sexually desire members of the same sex. Homophobic reactions often lead to intolerance, bigotry, and violence against anyone not acting within heterosexual norms. Because most LGBT people are raised in the same society as heterosexuals, they learn the same beliefs and stereotypes prevalent in the dominant society, leading to a phenomenon known as “internalized homophobia.”

Transvestite—an individual who dresses in the “opposite” gender clothing for a variety of reasons.

Transgendered— the old understanding of the word meant a person whose gender identity differs from what is culturally associated with their biological sex at birth. However, as information has evolved, it is now an umbrella term that includes a wide range of identities and includes pre-operative, post-operative, and non-operative transsexual people. In its general sense, it refers to anyone whose behavior or identity falls outside of stereotypical expectations for their gender.

Transsexual—a medical term referring to a person whose gender identity differs from what is culturally associated with their biological sex at birth and who chose to undergo sex reassignment surgery. This term is considered outdated. Most transsexual people

refer to themselves as transgendered.

Apendix D) Statement of Ally-dom.

The rain- bow flag became a visible symbol in the LGBT equal rights movement in the United States in the 1980's. The rainbow and pink triangle has been adopted for "Safe Zone in Peace Corps" and will be easily identifiable by LGBT people. Heterosexual allies also need visual representation to distinguish themselves thus the inclusion of the word "ally." The Safe at Peace Corps symbol is a message to lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgendered students and colleagues that you are knowledgeable, supportive and trustworthy. PCVs will know they can come to you for help, advice, or just to talk with someone who is affirmative of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The symbol also means that homophobic and heterosexist comments and actions will not be tolerated, but will be addressed in an educational and informative manner. Colleagues and PCVs have a right to their opinion; however, if someone is stating myths or misinformation about LBGT individuals you will inform them of more accurate information in a respectful manner.