

# Scenarios

 Small Group  101  Medium Trust  20 mins  LGBTQ

## Necessary supplies

- Scenario hand outs for participants

## Goals & objectives

- To provide real world situations that participants may encounter in the future and for participants to think through and game plan the different ways to handle the situation
- To empower participants to feel more comfortable applying the knowledge that they have gained during the course of the training in real-world situations

## Step-by-step walk through

1. Introduce the activity to the participants.
2. Split the group up into smaller sub-groups. Groups of 3 are ideal but no more than 4. \*read Meg's tidbit on how to split up groups here!\*
3. Give each group a scenario to work on - instruct them to talk out the scenario within the group and come up with a few best practices on how to handle the situation or scenario.
4. If any group finishes incredibly quickly either provide them another scenario or ask them to briefly describe their solution and complicate the scenario for them
5. Bring the groups back together and review the scenarios. Ask an individual from each group to read out their scenario and then ask the whole group to discuss what they thought the best way to handle the scenario would be. Ask for feedback from the larger group, add your own, and then move onto the next group repeating the process.

## Wrap-up

One of the key things that we want participants to get out of this exercises relates to the "[Platinum rule](#)." The idea behind the platinum rule is that while the golden rule is a nifty start, it leads us to believe (and treat) people as *we* wanted to be treated and not necessarily how *they* want to be treated. In discussing these scenarios hopefully we've teased out a bit that there are often a lot of different ways to address an issue or a sticking point and that the most important thing is to find out how to support someone how *they* want to be supported. Sure this is ever more challenging that the golden rule but it can also be ever more rewarding.

There isn't one way to handle these scenarios or any other challenges that we may encounter in our future, but hopefully through this course of this workshop we've come to see that discussing and engaging with these questions is the first thing that truly sets us up for future success.



## Make it your own

You can do this activity a number of different ways, you don't have to split groups up and have them sitting down in smaller groups to make it work.

Put up a spectrum on a wall with three signs, "very confident", "somewhat confident", "not at all confident". Read out a scenario and ask people to place themselves on the spectrum of how confident they would be in handling this situation you just described. From here you can have individuals simply shout out their thoughts or you can split people into smaller groups - taking people from all parts of the spectrum and putting them together. Note: Having people share ideas out loud requires a high level of trust as well as having people rate their confidence levels.

You can print out and place around the room the different scenarios. Ask people to stand by the one they would most like to answer. Or they feel they would be the least confident in knowing how to handle. Ask the groups to tackle the question they choose (while making sure no group gets too big).

You can role play out the scenario. After having people in smaller groups game plan how they would handle the scenario, you can act as the person that has the issue or the individual that the group is addressing. You can have the group elect a person to do the role play, or they can all act as one person and support each other through the scenario.

## Notes

Feel free to add any scenarios that you think would be helpful to this list. This is just a sampling to give you ideas on where you can go with the questions. Tailor scenarios to your group, for example, if you're working with Greek life as questions that are specific to their unique group using their terminology and situations that may arise.

It is great to have participants generate their own scenarios for this during the anonymous Q&A section.

## Guiding questions

*The following are questions that you could include in the scenario activity. The text that follows each question is suggestions of how to answer the question if the groups don't offer all of the different possibilities for a scenario.*

**You are becoming friends with this guy named Alex. One day you're hanging out Alex gets oddly quiet and finally after you ask them repeatedly if anything is bothering them they come out and tell you they're bi. Alex says he's totally comfortable with it, has known for a long time, but doesn't really feel like they know how to tell other people at school even though they really want to. What do you do?**

- Reassure Alex that you are glad that he felt he could tell you, that you can be trusted with the information, and that you're really happy to be helpful in anyway that you can
- Ask some questions. Why doesn't he feel like he can tell other people at school? What indicators have his friends given that they would not be cool (or would be cool) with having queer/gay/bisexual friends? Does he feel like its specifically to his bisexuality or is it because he is not straight? Careful to ask and not to grill... you're only looking to get information that will help you help him!
- Offer a few different scenarios to Alex.
- Game plan out what a conversation between he and one of his close friends may look like. Throw out the idea that he could just tell one of his friends and ask them to tell others. Or he could tell someone he trusts the most and ask them what they thought their mutual friends reactions could be.
- Test the waters by bringing up gay/bi/queer subjects, celebrities, issues around Alex's friends and see what their reactions are.
- Let Alex know that you believe even if his friends are initially surprised this doesn't mean they won't come around. That if he is comfortable with himself and his sexuality that he can likely explain and help his friends become comfortable with it too.

**You leave your dorm room one morning and you notice something on your friend José's whiteboard on his door just across the hall. José is one of your friends, is gay, and has been out to you since you've known him. The whiteboard says, "Hey fag – give me a call later today, we have to pregame that party. Jess." You know Jess is one of José's best friends, but you don't know her that well. What do you do?**

- It is important to make clear that in this scenario, while José maybe totally cool with Jess calling him that word, that other people seeing it on his white board may feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or otherwise negatively because they don't understand the relationship between him and Jess. The word can be quite triggering and therefore because it is in a public space it is an issue.
- Erase the word fag from the whiteboard message.
- Go to José and explain to him that you saw what Jess wrote on his white board, explain why you erased the word, and let him know how it make you feel. You could explain that you

- You could explain that you understand he might be ok with her using that word but that it makes you uncomfortable (and/or you feel it makes others uncomfortable) and so you erased it to ensure that others wouldn't see it. Ask José to talk to Jess and to let her know not to write that word or similar language on his whiteboard in a public space.
- Go to Jess and let her know that you saw her message and that you wanted to let her know that the word that she used made you uncomfortable. It is important to assume that Jess had no negative intentions, and to speak to her with that in mind. Let her know that you totally understand that her and José likely are cool with that word, but that other people may find it uncomfortable and that you'd appreciate if she just not use it in writing because some people may get the wrong idea
- Go to your RA. Ask them to speak to Jess or José about it. Let them know it isn't an incident of hate speech (as far as you know) that you simply think it is not an appropriate thing to have written on a whiteboard in the hallway even between friends and that you'd appreciate the RA talking to one of them just to sort out the situation.

**You and a group of friends are waiting in line for food at a dining hall. Some people behind you in line are chatting about the new Xbox that just came out and you overhear one of them say, “Dude you’re still playing on a PS2, that’s so gay, seriously.” What do you do?**

- Turn around and ask the individual who made the comment and inquire, “Hey, I don't know if you know this but some people feel really uncomfortable and unsafe when they hear that kind of language being used. I do and it'd be really cool if you could not say that phrase again,” or something to that effect.
- It's important to realize than most people aren't confronted on their use of homophobic language and that they may not have homophobic intentions behind it. It is helpful to remind people that the words they use matter and still have the effect of being perceived/received as homophobic even if they didn't mean/intend to. It is also very possible that the individual will avoid using such language again simply because they do not enjoy being confronted by random people in a lunch line. So either way its a win win.

**One of your teachers (who you know quite well) is talking about sexuality or gender in class. When the discussion goes quiet they turn to you and ask if you have anything additional to add. What do you do?**

- Speak with the teacher after class or during office hours (or send um an email!) to explain to them that you did not enjoy being singled out in front of the class in that way, and while you are really involved with GSA stuff on campus, that you'd still appreciate not being looked to as the representative or “expert” in the room.
- Explain that to be singled out publicly can be very uncomfortable, particularly when you may not be out to all of your classmates, and also point out that often stigmatized or marginalized students are put into the role of "educator" or "expert" by others and that it needs to be a choice whether to fill that role or not.



One of your new friends, Dee, who you don't know that well, meets you and a group of mutual friends for lunch. They start talking about their roommate and how weird and annoying they always are. Dee goes onto say, "She also told me that she's bisexual, I don't actually really have a problem with bisexuals but I don't know how comfortable I am, like, changing in the same room as her, I mean that's weird right? Like I don't know it just kind of weirds me out." What do you do.

- You could inquire (now with the group or later alone with Dee) what it is that weirds her out about her roommate. Is it that her roommate is bisexual and she doesn't totally get that? Would she feel equally weirded out if her roommate was gay? Does she not quite understand why her roommate felt the need to tell her?
- Would feel equally weirded out if roommate was gay. Chat with Dee about the fact that she doesn't need to feel weirded out that her roommate is bi. Point out that her roommate wanted her to know because she didn't want her to find out through some other source and then wonder why the roommate didn't tell Dee directly. By telling her directly the roommate is being very cognizant of Dee's feelings and it demonstrates that she is going to be respectful of that space in the future. Also point out that the roommate is likely very worried that Dee will feel uncomfortable in the space - so Dee doesn't need to worry about



## Questions for Staff, Faculty, Employees

1. You have gotten to know this new person in your life (could be a student, a peer, a coworker) and they said they really needed to talk to someone about something and then they tell you, “So I just wanted to let you know, I’m gay.” What do you do to support that person?
2. You meet someone new, they introduce themselves as Alex and they present in an androgynous way. You’re not really sure what pronouns to use - what should you do?
3. You bring up the idea of doing a diversity training at your new job or within the school that you attend with your peers. There is a lot of eye rolling and no one really says anything positive or affirming about the idea. What are some ways you could talk about your interest in diversity training that may get others interested? -  
You find out that someone after the meeting was talking about you and was wondering to others whether you were gay or something. How do you react?
4. You’ve been asked to advise an LGBTQ group on campus or at a local high school. After 2 or 3 meetings one of the students comes to you and says that while they appreciate that you’re there, they feel like they aren’t being included in the discussion because they are asexual and the stuff that the group has been talking about isn’t inclusive of aces. You don’t know much about asexuality. How do you proceed.
5. You’ve been promoting your school, workplace, or group as really LGBTQ friendly. A lot of the people involved are very aware of gay issues and are completely welcoming and accepting of other sexualities. You are part of the recruitment weekend for a new student or hire in your office or cohort and this individual identifies as trans\*. While speaking with them you realize that your group/work place doesn’t have gender neutral bathrooms, a lot of people were confusing this person’s gender pronouns all day, and generally not reaching out to this individual as much as others. How do you proceed when you notice this?

