

iNSIDEoUT and
queer youth takeover nc

present...

Vamos!
January 19-20, 2007

Friday

4:00 PM

Arrival

4:30 PM

Ice Breakers (???)

5:30 PM

Welcome & Intros (??? and iNSIDEoUT Board)

6:00 PM

Dinner

8:00 PM

Theatre of the Oppressed (Laurie)

Saturday

9:00 AM

Coming Out Breakfast (Emily)

10:00 AM

Guest Panel on Religious Diversity Within the LGBTQ Movement (Alisha)

12:30 PM

Lunch (Adam)

1:30 PM

Race Activity that needs a new name (Emily)

2:30 PM

Free Time/Art/Games

5:00 PM

The Future of LGBTQISA Youth Organizing in the Triangle (Amy)

6:30 PM

Dinner (Laurie)

8:30 PM

Drag Dance (Spectrum)

11:00 PM

The End (for now)...

Theater of the Oppressed

Topic: Overcoming Oppression

Goal: To discover ways to respond to oppression, to discuss the various forms oppression can take, and to develop the strength and skills required to transform oppressive situations into empowering ones. To help youth recognize their shared experiences.

Background on Theater of the Oppressed "I believe that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theater so that the people themselves may utilize them. The theater is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it." --Augusto Boal, *The Theater of the Oppressed*

The Theater of the Oppressed, established in the early 1970s by Brazilian director and Workers' Party (PT) activist Augusto Boal, is a form of popular theater, of, by, and for people engaged in the struggle for liberation. More specifically, it is a rehearsal theater designed for people who want to learn ways of fighting back against oppression in their daily lives. In the Theater of the Oppressed, oppression is defined, in part, as a power dynamic based on monologue rather than dialogue; a relation of domination and command that prohibits the oppressed from being who they are and from exercising their basic human rights. Accordingly, the Theater of the Oppressed is a participatory theater that fosters democratic and cooperative forms of interaction among participants. Theater is emphasized not as a spectacle but rather as a language designed to: 1) analyze and discuss problems of oppression and power; and 2) explore group solutions to these problems. This language is accessible to all. Bridging the separation between actor (the one who acts) and spectator (the one who observes but is not permitted to intervene in the theatrical situation), the Theater of the Oppressed is practiced by "spect-actors" who have the opportunity to both act and observe, and who engage in self-empowering processes of dialogue that help foster critical thinking. The theatrical act is thus experienced as conscious intervention, as a rehearsal for social action rooted in a collective analysis of shared problems of oppression. This particular type of interactive theater is rooted in the pedagogical and political principles specific to the popular education method developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire: 1) to see the situation lived by the participants; 2) to analyze the root causes of the situation; and 3) to act to change the situation following the precepts of social justice

Augusto Boal

Augusto Boal is a political activist and major innovator of post-Brechtian theater. He served as Artistic Director of the Arena Theater in Sao Paulo from 1956 to 1971. In the 1970s, he came under attack by the Brazilian government, resulting in his imprisonment, torture and subsequent exile. Boal has lectured, conducted workshops, and mounted productions throughout North and South America, Europe, India and Africa, and has written a number of books, including *Theater of the Oppressed*, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, and *The Rainbow of Desire*. An activist in the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), he presently resides in Rio de Janeiro. In 1992, he was elected to the City Council of Rio, a post he held for four years. Once installed in office, he adapted his theater techniques for use in city politics, with some hilarious--and sometimes rancorous--results. Members of the Center for the Theater of the Oppressed became Boal's City Council staff, and created seventeen companies of players practicing "Legislative Theater" throughout the city.

How it Works: Using the actors for each scenario, run through an oppression scenario once – where the person being oppressed is successfully oppressed. After the first run-through, have the group identify who was the oppressor and who was the oppressed. Talk a little about why that person was oppressed or discriminated against. Once the group has talked a little about the scenario, “rewind” back to a point in the scenario where the person is first encountering the oppression. From here on tell the group that they are allowed to yell “freeze” where they may take the position of the oppressed person and run through the scenario trying to successfully and nonviolently identify and overcome the oppression. The spectactors may bring in anyone from the audience they wish to be co-actors in overcoming the oppression and have them represent any person they wish. The person acting as the oppressor must continue with the oppression until they feel the group has done a good job at overcoming the oppression – at which point they, as the oppressor, give in. After each run-through of each scenario, discuss what each person did well and what they could do or use to have made their case stronger or better – constructive criticism only!

Coming Out Breakfast

Goal: To break the ice and establish a supportive, comfortable open environment for the weekend.

How it Works: Students will be seated randomly for breakfast. We'll number the tables and then draw numbers to determine the seating. On each table, there will be several cards scattered, containing questions about coming out. A discussion leader will be seated at each table, and will facilitate a discussion based on the questions on the cards.

Questions:

Who was the first person you came out to?

What does it mean to be out to yourself?

When/how did you come out to yourself?

What does being out have to do with labels ("lesbian", "gay", etc.)?

What was scary about coming out?

What was something bad that happened to you coming out?

What was good about coming out?

How did you find the strength to come out?

What made coming out difficult?

Who was the hardest person to come out to?

Are there some places you're still not out? Where?

Is it ever better not to come out? Why?

Why is it important to come out?

What different actions or behaviors constitute coming out?

What is coming out?

Who was the easiest person to come out to?

Did you ever embarrass yourself coming out? When?

Did you ever regret coming out? When?

Describe the role models you have who have come out.

Guest Panel on Religious Diversity

Goals:

- * to expose LGBTQ youth to the various religious/spiritual communities that affirm who they are and that are interested in their development as a religious/spiritual person
- * to let LGBTQ youth know they have religious/spiritual options.
- * to debunk the myth that self-acceptance as an LGBTQ person doesn't mean that one cannot also be a religious/spiritual person.

How it Works: Several guests, each representing a different religious background, will sit on a panel. After an introduction from each of them, the leader will facilitate a discussion by panel members, taking questions from the audience.

Step Up, Step Back: Looking at Diversity within the LGBTQ Community

Ground rules:

- 1) Everyone should remain silent during the Circle activity.
- 2) Be respectful.
- 3) It's okay to feel uncomfortable at times—own it and try to have trust in the process.
- 4) Use “I” statements when speaking during the discussion. For example, “I felt surprised when...”

The Circle

The facilitator will read the statements below one at a time. Each time I read a statement, such as “Go to the circle if you listen to country music,” everyone to whom that applies will go to the inside of the circle. Those on the inside will all take a moment to look at everyone outside the circle and think about how they feel. Those on the outside will take a moment to look at the people in the middle of the circle and think about how they feel.

Go to the center of the circle if:

- You identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- You identify as straight.
- You identify as trans.
- You identify as questioning.
- You identify as queer.
- you have ever been called a maricón, a dyke, or a faggot.
- You have ever been called a nigger, chink, or a spic.
- You have ever told one or more parents (and what counts as a parent is up to you) about your sexual orientation.
- You have ever told one or more parents about your gender identity.
- You identify as Black.
- You identify as Asian.
- You identify as Middle Eastern.
- You were born outside of the U.S.
- Your best friend is of another race/ethnicity.
- You have ever dated someone of another race/ethnicity.
- Both of your parents graduated from college.

- You've ever been on food stamps or welfare.
- You identify as Wiccan.
- You identify as Hindu.
- You identify as male.
- You identify as female.
- You identify as neither male nor female.
- You listen to hip hop.
- You listen to punk.

The Debrief

The point of this exercise is to reflect upon inclusion and exclusion, being welcomed or alienated, being on the inside or the outside. Sometimes we assume that everyone in the LGBTQ community shares a lot of the same experiences—and certainly there are some that many of us do share. But it is important to be aware of the diversity within the LGBTQ community as well, and the purpose of this activity was to highlight those points where our experiences are unique from one another. It's okay, as I mentioned at the beginning, to feel uncomfortable at different moments—then hopefully we can go beyond that feeling by asking ourselves why we feel this way and what we can do to change it.

Now we will break into smaller groups for discussion.

Questions:

- 1) What was it like to be in the circle with a lot of people?
- 2) How did it feel to be in the circle with only a few people?
- 3) Was the circle ever empty? Why do you think that was?
- 4) When you were standing outside of the circle, how did it feel to look at the folks in the center of the circle?
- 5) What surprised you?
- 6) What made you feel uncomfortable?
- 7) Do you ever feel like you have to stand up for yourself within the LGBTQ community because of your race, class, gender, religion, or sexual orientation?

Future of LGBTQISA Youth Organizing in the Triangle

Goal: To develop a plan to ensure that our community continues to provide a space for queer youth, especially queer youth of color, in the future. To get feedback from participants about what kind of programming they want to happen in the area this coming semester. To explain the significance of the GSA movement, and the extraordinary power of GSAs as a tool for creating social change. To discuss the importance of diversity within the queer youth movement, and how to increase diversity. To explain the significance of youth initiative and leadership, and to discuss the role of youth within the queer youth movement. To learn what local resources are available for queer youth.

How it Works:

Participants are seated in chairs in a circle. They brainstorm local resources for queer youth. Anything that promotes lgbtq justice or helps youth achieve their goals as lgbtq-a people, counts as a resource, including individuals, groups, entities, organizations, objects, animals, minerals, vegetables, etc. Each resource is written on a large piece of posterboard, and all the pieces of posterboard are distributed around the circle; participants hold them up so that others can see. The names of all of the participants at the event are written on one piece of posterboard (prepared beforehand), which is held up with the others.

On the floor, there is a large sheet of white paper and several markers. On the paper, students write down ideas for queer youth organizing in the future – what would they like to see available for queer youth in the area? They should fill the paper with ideas.

Questions for discussion:

1. What resources are available for queer youth organizing in the Triangle?
2. What events, programs, activities, resources for queer youth would you like to see in the future?
3. How does the GSA movement serve as a tool for creating social change?
4. What is your role, as youth, in the future of queer youth organizing in the Triangle?
5. How has the structure of the queer youth community in the Triangle changed over the past year?
6. How can we make sure that the changes we have undergone as a community don't impact us negatively? How can we continue to support youth who were involved in organizations that no longer exist?
7. How can we promote diversity within the queer youth movement and provide space for youth from different cultures/ethnicities/races/economic classes/etc.?