



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth*

## What is the *Healthy Relationships Program (HRP) for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual + (2SLGBTQIA+) Youth*?

The *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* is a small group positive mental health promotion program for gender, sexual, and romantic minority youth. This program includes 17 sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. It may be delivered in Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA) or 2SLGBTQIA+ youth groups in schools or communities.

## What are the goals of the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth*?

The program helps build resiliency and promote wellbeing among 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. It affirms, validates, and celebrates sexual, gender, and romantic diversity, cultivates a caring and supportive community, and helps 2SLGBTQIA+ youth develop skills and strategies that promote healthy relationships.

## What topics does the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* cover?

This trauma-informed, strengths-focused program explores stressors unique to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, including identity and expression invalidation, stigma, prejudice and discrimination, internalized oppression, coming out, safety, and microaggressions.

## Does delivering the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* interfere with regular Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) meetings?

The program was designed to compliment standard GSA programming. Club members should be consulted to determine their interest in participating in a formalized program. In focus groups, youth described how the program prompted them to explore important content and examine relevant topics in more depth.



## Won't a structured program inhibit youth-led discussion?

The *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* was designed to be very flexible and to support open discussion. Facilitators and youth can still follow the conversation / topics that emerge naturally in the group. Participants have commented that having some structure contributes to more thorough discussion of important topics. For example, one youth stated: “...*the program sort of brought up some topics we wouldn't have considered by ourselves...it did a better job at promoting topics and discussion than we would have by ourselves.*”

## What does the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* add beyond a well-facilitated discussion?

The *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* prompts youth to share strategies and develop skills to cope with 2SLGBTQIA+-based oppression (e.g., unsupportive families). For example, one youth remarked: “*I mean some of [the sessions] got heated 'cause we'd get talking about our family and then the rage would appear...But we did...get to talk about like, 'oh, how should I handle my peers doing this?' 'How should I handle my family doing this?' How should I handle my partner doing this?'*” Another youth shared: “*Like honestly, it's all stuff to help you in life...it's to help you be...a stronger person...it was all, like, really good to see, like different ways of coping and dealing with stuff.*”

## What is the ideal number of *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* participants?

The *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* is a small group program that can be comfortably facilitated with 5-25 youth.

## How often should I deliver *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* sessions?

It is best to consult with GSA members to decipher how often they would like to participate in the program. In focus groups, youth voiced that they would ideally participate in the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* during half of their regularly-scheduled group meetings. This way, club members could still lead student-directed discussions, and spearhead educational and activist initiatives, if they desired to.



## Must the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth* be delivered in its entirety?

Facilitators and youth can select sessions that are most relevant for their group. There is an activity in the first session that orients youth to the different topics and collects their input about the most relevant topics for their particular group. Since each session stands alone, they do not have to be delivered consecutively.

## What do facilitators think about the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth*?

Educators appreciated having a structured program to deliver in GSAs. One educator related: *“I found it very easy to follow – the sessions are all organized very clearly and the sample responses are helpful as well.”* Another facilitator expressed: *“I loved how everything was framed in the program and so thoughtfully done...I loved having positive affirmations at the end [of sessions] and a sense of closure. I loved it. I think the kids in my group loved it...just those positive affirmations at the end...the guiding questions, having established rules. I thought it was all really incredibly wonderful and I definitely think having it available for a GSA is brilliant.”* According to facilitators, the program provided a vital platform for youth to explore and discuss relevant 2SLGBTQIA+ topics and it helped build supportive networks among group members. It also enhanced facilitators’ personal understandings of 2SLGBTQIA+ topics, as one educator communicated: *“I think that [youth] are feeling empowered...and as for me...I am learning a ton!”*

## What do you think about the *HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth*?

Youth described how the program brought up important topics that they may not have otherwise explored in their regular GSA meetings. Through participating in the program, youth had a much-needed venue to examine 2SLGBTQIA+ issues and topics in-depth, share and learn from each other, and build supportive networks with those who experience similar stressors. The program helped 2SLGBTQIA+ youth validate and affirm their identities, expressions, and experiences, as one youth contended: *“...I liked session two, the mine to name one, because I like having, like, a space where I could describe my own identity, and it would be valid and people wouldn’t be like, ‘that’s not real.’”* It also provided structured opportunities for youth to confront and process minority stressors, and develop essential coping strategies to bolster their well-being and manage toxic relationships, as another youth shared: *“...the coming out lesson got us all talking and maybe learning more about each other and our situations at home, which led to better support systems.”*



**Western**  
Centre for School  
Mental Health

