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NDWA LGBTQ *Pride in Our Work* Workshop

A companion piece to NDWA's special edition *Pride in Our Work* Zine

Dear NDWA affiliates and chapters,

Every year June is a month to celebrate and honor lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people. Being visible in our full humanity, lifting up our stories, and making connections is a direct challenge to the system that wishes to keep us small, divided, and ashamed. When we celebrate together, we are more powerful!

NDWA works for the respect, recognition, and inclusion of domestic workers and to build a vibrant movement for global justice rooted in a commitment to worker and human rights. Domestic workers come from all walks of life -- respect, recognition, and inclusion is not only about labor conditions, but also about fighting racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and sexism.

We know that hate and violence against our Queer family is violence against all of us, and it is up to all of us to stand united against hate. Our lives, stories, and struggles are intertwined and connected, and our desire for love and compassion is universal. As a movement we are called together to support one another and to keep fighting for our vision of love and justice.

This curriculum and the collection of stories featured in the *Pride in Our Work* zine lifts up the voices of LGBTQ and ally domestic workers and organizers. We hope that these resources can spark dialogue among your members and help deepen our commitment to fighting for collective liberation for all of us.

With love and solidarity,
- NDWA Queer Caucus

Materials needed:

- NDWA [Pride in Our Work zine](#) to hand out to participants
- Handouts for the definitions matching game
- Prizes for the definitions matching game (for everyone)

Time needed: 2 hours

Facilitator preparation:

- Read the *Pride in Our Work zine* and do research on anything you yourself have questions about. You can reach out to an NDWA staff person if you would like additional support.
- If possible, hand out the newsletter/zine before your workshop, as it's ideal to have people read it before the workshop.

1) Introduction [10 min]

Explain: June is LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Pride month, and NDWA has created this workshop for our chapters and affiliates to spark conversation within your memberships about the links between LGBTQ liberation and the struggle for domestic worker rights. Of course, you can use the zine and curriculum anytime, not just in June :)

In this workshop we will:

1. Learn definitions related to LGBTQ identity and the LGBTQ movement
2. Talk about how all systems of oppression are connected, and about what it means for us to commit to ending them all
3. Think about how we frame our work to include an analysis around LGBTQ liberation
4. Lift up the voices of LGBTQ people in our movement

Agreements:

Explain: For some people, this can be a difficult topic to discuss. Before we start the workshop, let's brainstorm some agreements that will help us discuss these issues in an open and respectful way.

Brainstorm agreements together. As facilitator, you should make sure that the following points are raised:

- Use "I" statements and speak from your own experience
- Listen actively and respect others when they are speaking
- Participate as fully as you can
- Come to the conversation with an open mind and without assumptions

Let participants know that if they need to talk to someone after this workshop about anything that came up, that they can come to you or others in your organization.

2) Participant introductions [15 min]

Ask participants if they can think of a time when they had a secret they felt they couldn't tell anyone for fear of what those people would say or do. Ask participants to remember how they felt as they tried to keep that secret inside. What were some of the emotions they felt?

Ask participants to introduce themselves and share a few words about the emotions they felt - WITHOUT mentioning the actual secret they were trying to hold in.

Explain: These same emotions are what many LGBTQ people feel about disclosing their identities to the people in their lives and to the world at large. Fear, shame, worry, doubt, guilt, etc. For many LGBTQ people, coming out can be dangerous and can lead to real consequences that range from losing contact with family members, losing jobs, to facing physical violence.

LGBTQ pride month is a time when many LGBTQ people fight back against this fear and violence, assert their right to live and love freely, and recommit to ending all systems of oppression. Pride month is often marked by parties and parades, but it began as a powerful political statement with the Stonewall Riots or Stonewall Uprising that started on June 28, 1969 when a group of LGBTQ people of color in New York City decided to stand up against the police who had been brutalizing and criminalizing their community for a long time.

3) Definitions [30 min]

Explain: We're going to do an exercise to define some words related to the LGBTQ community and LGBTQ issues. There are two reasons why we're doing this: 1) to help us understand the different types of sexual orientation and gender identity, and 2) sometimes - without realizing it - people use words that are disrespectful to LGBTQ people. Talking about definitions will give us a shared language that we can use when talking about the LGBTQ community. We'll use the words that we define now during the rest of this workshop.

Break into an even number of teams and do the "**Definitions Matching Game**". Handouts are at the end of this guide. There are many definitions, so we split it into two separate matching worksheets. Give the teams **10 minutes** to do the exercise.

Then review the answers together, reading each definition and asking which word it defines. How many did you get right? Which ones do you have questions about?

Here's the answer guide and the words paired with their definitions are in the zine.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
D	A	I	B	C	E	F	G	H	Q	K	O	L	J	M	R	P	N

It's a nice touch to have prizes for everyone - candy is a common one.

4) Connections with the domestic worker movement [30 min]

Step into the Center (20 min)

Gather up everyone standing in a circle. Explain the activity: I will read a declaration, and if that declaration is true for you, step into the center of the circle. If the declaration is not true for you, stay standing where you are. Look around you.

After each declaration (or group of declarations), you as the facilitator should share the examples and statistics below about how that experience is connected to the LGBTQ community. Included here are questions to open up a brief dialogue after each phrase.

Declarations:

1. Step into the center if you have seen someone who has been made fun of, suffered harassment or violence at school.

- In NDWA's Pride Zine, there is a story about a member from Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Monica, whose son is gay. She tells about his experience at school:

When he got to Middle School, the children were always criticizing him. They hit him, and he didn't defend himself. I went to the school and spoke with a teacher who told me that if my son was gay, he just had to say so, and nobody would bother him. I got very angry because I thought that my son had the right to decide when to talk about it, only if he wanted to, because I knew that it was not going to be so easy. He didn't want to go to the bathroom because the other kids pushed him and hit him. I used to say to him, "Don't pay attention to them. I will always be with you, no matter who you are." But even so, he didn't want to tell me about it. One time, some kids left him messages about how they were going to kill him, that this was his last day. They said, "Go to the Castro; that's your place." I only realized this because my daughter listened to his messages and told me. He did not tell me about it, but I noticed that he was nervous. I went to the school to speak with the Director, and when my son saw me, he told me that nothing was wrong and that it was a joke. But I knew that wasn't true.

- Statistics:

- 97% of students report having heard homophobic comments from their peers.
- 53% of students report having heard homophobic comments from school employees.
- Various studies show that LGBTQ youth are 2 to 3.5 times more likely to attempt suicide than their straight peers.
- Key contributing factors include bullying, discrimination, harassment, depression, anxiety, family rejection.
- Family acceptance and connectedness, caring adults, and school safety are the strongest protections for LGBTQ youth.

- Discussion Questions:
 - How did you feel when something like this happened to one of your children or another young person you care about?
 - Does this type of harassment or bullying against LGBTQ people occur in our communities?

2. Step into the center if you have experienced negative and false prejudice against your identity or who you are.

- In the zine, there is Flavia's testimony, a transgender woman, member of *La Colectiva de Mujeres*. She shares:

I have also been very lucky to have been well received in the homes where I am currently working, without any problems. I believe that also because of my totally natural behavior from the start, many of them did not even notice it – many of them becoming surprised when they found out. Obviously, this gave me great satisfaction because my projection was the right one, and I was not seen as the negative stereotypes of trans women who are seen as transvestites or vulgar people.

- Discussion Questions:
 - The good thing is that she has had the experience of being accepted, but she is always thinking and worrying about what people will see in her with negative stereotypes about transgender people.
 - What can we all do to counter and stop harmful stereotypes about transgender people?

3. Step into the center if you have felt frustration with the expectations that society has for your behavior because of your gender.

- In the zine there is Kassandra's testimony, a transgender woman, member of Casa Latina. She tells about her experience about sharing who she is with her family at the age of thirty:

My family has accepted me, but it was hard. When I was a boy I would hide myself. That's why I got married, had a lot of girlfriends. When I was telling my brother, he said "I know." They always knew. I had spent so much energy pretending but everybody knew I was gay. I learned about accepting ourselves for who we are. That can be the hardest thing.

- Dialogue Questions:
 - Do you have examples about how our misogynist society says that men and women must behave?
 - What are some of the negative impacts of these stereotypical ideas about gender roles?

4. Step into the center if you have had an experience of someone identifying you incorrectly or referring to you with an identity that you don't use yourself.

- In the zine, there is Leah's testimony, an organizer with Damayan:

As a masculine-of-center, queer woman, I am often mistaken for a man. We call this mis-gendering – referring to someone by a gender to which they do not identify.

- Discussion Questions:
 - Ask if anyone from the group wants to share an experience that they've had.

5. Step into the center if at any given moment, you have suffered retaliation for exercising your rights.

- In the zine, there's Lissandra's testimony, a member of Fe y Justicia Worker Center, about the harassment that she suffered at a job:

The first week, my supervisor tried to approach me in a way that was different from how he approached the other workers, with exaggerated smiles, looking for moments to be alone with me to flirt and invite me to have alcoholic drinks with him after office hours. I felt very perturbed by his attitude and decided to tell him about my sexual preference and ask him to stop the insinuations towards me, which made me uncomfortable. The supervisor retaliated against me for being a lesbian. First, he told me that I was wrong about my sexuality, and that he was going to show me that I really liked men. I told him that I was not interested, and seeing that he did not get what he wanted he began to make fun of me with his coworkers about my sexuality and to give me heavier work, work that was normally performed by men. In order to preserve my job, I did all the work I was assigned, knowing that an excessive workload was a consequence of having told him about my sexual preference and having rejected my supervisor's propositions.

- Discussion Questions:
 - What other examples do you know of retaliation toward people who exercise their rights at work?

6. Step into the center if at any moment someone has supported you in a situation in which you were suffering an injustice.

In the zine, Leticia, of TIRRC (Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition), tells about her experience starting a group for LGBTQ immigrants, even though she is heterosexual.

It's really easy to feel like you can't start a program like this because you don't have special funding for it, or you don't have all the materials or experience you need. My advice is to not think about those barriers! Think instead about what you can learn along the way. Once you open the space for this community to come together, so much creativity and so many ideas come from the participants themselves.

We are very excited about deepening and broadening this work and look forward to connecting with other groups who are working for immigrant and LGBTQ rights.

7. Step into the center if you have ever wanted to interrupt an injustice but did not do it because you didn't know what to do.

- Many times, we are not going to know exactly what to do. It is important to remember that we can ask the person suffering the injustice about how we can support, and from our own experiences we know that we feel supported even if many times the interruption or the support may not be perfect.
- Read the definition of "ally": **LGBTQ Ally** – Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and gender privilege in themselves and others; a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.

Full group reflections on the activity (10 min)

Explain that the activity shows that many of the abuses faced by LGBTQ people are the same as the ones that occur with other types of oppression (abandonment, discrimination, prejudice, fear of attending school, etc.). Also, many people face multiple forms of oppression on a daily basis at the same time.

Questions for discussion:

- Why is it important that we, as a movement of low-wage workers, make the connections between our issues and LGBTQ issues?
- Why is it sometimes hard for us to make these connections?
- What are some ways that we can push past those barriers?

4) How our organizations address LGBTQ issues [30 min]

Explain that we're going to talk now about some of the ways that our organizations are addressing LGBTQ issues. We'll hear about three different organizations - La Colectiva de Mujeres, the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), and the National Domestic Workers Alliance - and then we'll have a chance to talk about what our own organizations can do to integrate an analysis of LGBTQ liberation into our work.

Present a couple points about the work of La Colectiva de Mujeres, TIRRC, and NDWA that's highlighted in the zine in these articles:

- Introduction to members' stories by Guillermina Castellanos of *La Colectiva de Mujeres*
- Article about the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition's (TIRRC) new program for LGBTQ migrants, by Leticia Alvarez
- Article about the National Domestic Workers Alliance's Queer Caucus

Questions for discussion:

- How can we frame the issues that we are currently working on to include an analysis of LGBTQ people, homophobia, and transphobia?
- What are some ways to be an ally to LGBTQ people in our work and lives?

5) Closing [10 min]

Remind participants that if they need to talk to someone after this workshop about anything that came up, that they can come to you or others in your organization.

Recap / Summary

We live under systems of Heterosexism and the Gender Binary that give power and privilege to heterosexual and gender normative people at the expense of queer and transgender peoples. Our vision for justice must include rights, recognition, and respect for LGBTQ people.

Ask participants to share one thing they learned today and one commitment or action step they will take away from this conversation. It can be a commitment to do something, learn something, say something, etc.

Thank all for participating!

Definitions Matching Game¹ - #1

1. Sexual Orientation 2. Sex 3. Queer 4. Gender 5. Gender Binary System 6. Homosexual 7. Gay 8. Lesbian 9. Bisexual	A. The classification of people as male or female. At birth infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. B. A series of social conventions (expectations, conducts, roles) that are usually identified as masculine or feminine. The second feminist movement made the distinction between sex (biological characteristics) and gender (the result of socialization). C. The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or. D. Describes an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. E. A person who is primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex. F. Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. 2. Term used to refer to the LGBTQ community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual G. Term used to describe female-identified people who are attracted to females in a romantic, erotic, and/or emotional sense. H. A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others. I. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been taken up by members of the maligned group, who use it as a term of defiant pride. For decades 'queer' was used solely as a derogatory adjective for gays and lesbians, but in the 1980s the term began to be used by gay and lesbian activists as a term of self-identification. Eventually, it came to be used as an umbrella term that included gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold 'queer' to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexuals is often considered offensive.
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¹ Various resources were used in the creation of these definitions, including curriculum from School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL), <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>, and <http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>

Definitions Matching Game - #2

1. Discrimination	J. Derived from the Greek for “same” and “fear”. It refers to the fear/hatred toward lesbians/ gay men/ bisexual people.
2. Heterosexism	K. The system that normalizes y maintains heterosexual conduct and heterosexual relationships to the detriment of human conducts and relationships of a sexual orientation different from the heterosexual. (For example, state benefits for heterosexual, married couples.)
3. Transphobia	L. One's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices.
4. Gender Identity	M. Derived from the Latin for “crossing”. An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including <i>transgender</i> . Regularly abbreviated as “trans”. Use the descriptive term preferred by the individual. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon medical procedures.
5. Homophobia	N. An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions (including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries). Unlike <i>transgender</i> , <i>transsexual</i> is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word <i>transgender</i> . It is best to ask which term an individual prefers. If an individual prefers the use of this term, it should be used as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.
6. Transgender	O. Fear of/hate toward people who do not meet gender conventions.
7. LGBTQ Ally	P. May refer to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others (to “come out” to friends, etc.). In recent years, undocumented immigrants have adopted the term when referring to a public sharing of their immigration status.
8. Coming Out	Q. Prejudice + power. It occurs when members of a more powerful social group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful social group. Discrimination can take many forms, including both individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges accorded to other groups. Ongoing discrimination creates a climate of oppression for the affected group.
9. Transexual	R. Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and gender privilege in themselves and others; a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.