Information on Hosting
Stonewall Center Speakers Bureau Panels

Thank you for hosting a Stonewall Center Speakers Bureau panel at your class or organization. We’re excited to speak to your students about the lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer people and their allies.

This packet was created to help make the upcoming panel a success, provide you and your group valuable resources, and provide assessment tools to help us ensure our program is meeting its goals.

Again, thank you for inviting us!

Speakers Bureau Goals

The University of Massachusetts Stonewall Speakers Bureau is a valuable resource to the UMass campus and surrounding communities.

LGBTQ people are often invisible, and their invisibility allows myths, stereotypes, misinformation, fear, and intolerance to flourish. This leads to harassment, discrimination, and oppression against LGBTQ people. The Speakers Bureau was established to break down ignorance that is at the root of sexual and gender prejudice. By letting people get to know lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer people and their allies, the Stonewall Centers hopes to dispel some of the myths, stereotypes, and misinformation present in society about LGBTQ people.

The Speakers Bureau is committed to breaking the silence by talking about the lives of LGBTQ people.

As a result of being a part of the audience, participants will:

- Gain familiarity with terminology related to LGBTQA people and their experiences
- Gain sensitivity and awareness of the needs and experiences of LGBTQA people
- Gain familiarity with the Stonewall Center website address, the Center’s physical location, and the resources, programs, and services the Center offers

Preparing for the Panel

1. Please distribute (print/copy or email) the Participant Handout (4 pages) to the panel audience. In addition, you may want to distribute the optional materials: Info. on Transgender People, info. for K-12 Teachers & Administrators, and LGBTQ Experiences at Colleges and Universities

2. Please print, copy, and cut the Participant Survey. Please distribute these to your group immediately following the panel.
Panel Format

The lead speaker will arrive 15 minutes prior to the event to briefly meet with you, make sure the room is set up properly, and address any last minute needs. The panelists will arrive about 5 to 15 minutes prior to the start of the event.

WHEN THE PANEL BEGINS (5 minutes)

- **The HOST** introduces the Stonewall Center Speakers Bureau Panel
  - Explains why the panel has been invited
  - Introduces the lead speaker
- **The LEAD SPEAKER** will:
  - Introduce themselves and the other panelists
  - Provide information about the UMass Stonewall Center, explain where it is, and what resources the center provides
  - Go over the format of the panel with the group
  - Review the ground rules
    - Confidentiality is important
    - Panelists are not there to engage in a debate, but to share their experiences
    - Panelists only speak for themselves
    - There are no stupid questions
    - Panelists reserve the right not to answer particular questions

THE PANELISTS WILL SHARE THEIR STORIES (20-30 minutes)

- Each panelist will speak for approximately 5 minutes

QUESTION AND ANSWERS (varied depending on availability of time)

- The LEAD SPEAKER will facilitate a question and answer period.

PANEL CLOSURE (5 minutes)

- The LEAD SPEAKER will conclude the Q&A section 5 minutes prior to the time scheduled for the panel to end, and ask the audience to fill out the Participant Surveys.
- The LEAD SPEAKER will thank the audience and the host, and excuse the panelists
- **The HOST** collects the Participant Surveys from the audience

AFTER THE PANEL

- **The HOST** completes the Host Evaluation
- **The HOST** submits the Participant Surveys and Host Evaluation via mail or inter-office mail to the Stonewall Center:

  The Stonewall Center, Crampton Hall, 256 Sunset Ave., Amherst, MA 01003

The Stonewall Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Ground Rules for Stonewall Center Speakers Bureau Panels

Confidentiality is important.
Personal information shared during the Speakers Bureau panel is confidential and should not leave the room. Some of the speakers may not be “out” to everyone. It is important that audience members not identify the panelists in public, such as by calling out, “Hey, didn’t I see you at that gay speakers panel?,” if they should see one of the speakers elsewhere on campus. This confidentiality policy also applies to what audience members disclose during the presentation.

Panelists are not there to engage in a debate, but to share their experiences.
The main goals of the Speakers Bureau are to share the panelists’ personal experiences and to present factual information.

Panelists only speak for themselves.
The panelists represent only themselves, not all LGBTQ people and their allies. The diversity of LGBTA identities is extremely broad, and the panelists’ experiences constitute only a small segment of LGBT experiences. Assuming that all queer people are alike is a form of stereotyping commonly practiced against oppressed groups. It is important that audience members speak only for themselves as well.

There are no stupid questions.
For some people in the audience, the Speakers Bureau panel will be their first exposure to a group of “out” LGBTQ people. Questions may be asked that seem naïve or even offensive. It is better to have these questions expressed, so that the panel can address the stereotypes and misinformation behind them. The panelists have volunteered to speak to your group because they are comfortable answering questions, and want to share their experiences with you. The panel is an opportunity for you to ask questions that you might not feel comfortable asking another LGBTQ person you know.

Panelists reserve the right not to answer particular questions.
Some panelists may not want to discuss certain aspects of their personal lives, such as their sexual behavior or relationships. They also might not have an answer to any given question, for many different reasons. Individual panelists will decide when to answer and what to share. The audience does not need to worry about censoring their questions.