



Beyond the Rainbow

Training Guide for Facilitators on youth,
intimacy and audio storytelling



FDV UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
Faculty of Social Sciences



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Introduction

Welcome to the Training Guide for Facilitators on youth, intimacy and audio storytelling. This guide is the joint effort of four organisations from France, Slovenia, Ireland and Serbia, brought together through the Erasmus+ KA210 project *Beyond the Rainbow: Exploring Youth Intimacy through Audio Storytelling*. The main objectives are to strengthen cooperation between partners, share practice, build cross-cultural understanding, support networks, and document the realities experienced by LGBT+ youth in Ireland, Serbia, France and Slovenia.

One of the core goals of *Beyond the Rainbow* is to increase understanding and awareness of LGBT+ issues among young people, educators, service providers and the wider community. Developed through partner meetings and workshops held in Marseille, this guide brings together practical tools and activities designed to create open and inclusive spaces that encourage social engagement, amplify youth voices, strengthen understanding and improve media literacy. The training uses media resources, including film and radio clips, and is intended for educators, youth workers and facilitators working with young people across Europe. The partner organisations are Jouir (France), the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), UCC98.3FM (Ireland), and the Centre for Banat Studies (Serbia). The eight training modules are presented in English, with translations in French, Slovenian and Serbian. Each module includes a short introduction, the number of participants, goals, required materials, step-by-step instructions, tips for facilitators and an assessment section. These guidelines can be freely adapted by the facilitator.

A young member of the LGBT+ community and contributor to this project, Jelena Filipovic from Serbia, explains why the guide matters:

Being part of this international LGBT+ education project has been a really meaningful experience for me. Growing up in a small town in Serbia and being part of the LGBT+ community, I know how hard it is to find reliable information, support, or safe spaces where young people can express themselves freely. Even today, young people in Serbia mostly rely on the internet, friends, or incomplete information, because there are very few structured programmes or trained workers in this field. Since joining the project, I have seen how important it is for young people from different countries to come together to share their experiences, compare notes, and learn from each other.

Although we share a common goal of inclusivity, creating safe spaces, and giving young people tools to express themselves, every country approaches LGBT+ issues differently, depending on local traditions, challenges and resources. That is why this guide can help turn these differences into a shared methodology. For me personally, this matters because youth work around sexuality and identity in Serbia is still in its early stages. There is a lack of structured tools or proven methods, so this guide can help organisations follow quality approaches.

Permissions and consent

Some method sheets use film clips, music, or online media, and some involve recording participants. Use legally sourced media and do not record or redistribute copyrighted clips. Where participants are recorded (audio or video), get explicit informed consent and be clear about what will be recorded, how files will be stored, who can access them, and whether anything will be shared outside the room. Always offer a no-recording option.

NB Workshops are ordered by accessibility and delivery progression.

Meet the partners

Jouir Podcasts

Jouir Podcasts is a French NGO, based in Marseille which aims at promoting positive sex education, open conversations around intimacy and empower youth regarding gender violences. We focus particularly on marginalized groups among youngsters. We work all over France and Europe through local partner NGO and institutions. Speaking groups and podcasting are used as psycho-social tools to help reconnect individuals to their identity and their community. Jouir relies on intersectional principles, that's to say that we consider gender, race and class as interrelated discriminations. Jouir is also a feminist organization, promoting gender equity.

Center for Banat Studies

The Center for Banat Studies is a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded on May 5, 2014, in Vršac. The goals of the Center are: professional and scientific research of the Banat region, promoting tolerance in multiethnic and multiconfessional environments, protecting and promoting tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and organizing and promoting educational programs.

University of Ljubljana

The University of Ljubljana (UL) is the oldest and largest institution of higher learning and scientific research in Slovenia, founded in 1919. It includes 23 faculties and 3 art academies, offering a wide range of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs across all fields of study, including arts, sciences, engineering, medicine, and humanities. The university serves nearly 40,000 students.

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FDV) at the University of Ljubljana is the primary Slovenian faculty in the field of social sciences, renowned for its interdisciplinary study programs, research activities, and high-quality teaching, as well as numerous curricular and extracurricular activities.

UCC98.3FM

UCC98.3FM is a volunteer-led college and community radio station based in Cork, serving students across the city and welcoming participants from UCC, MTU, and ETB courses. Broadcasting on FM with an approximate 40 km transmission radius, the station provides training and a platform for new voices, local music, and creative audio production, with a strong focus on inclusion, participation, and public value.

Workshop 1: Understanding and Safely Sharing LGBTQ+ Stories

Partner organisation: CENTER FOR BANAT STUDIES (Serbia)

Overview

This 2-hour session aims to help young people understand the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities through storytelling and media examples. It creates a safe space where participants can listen, share, and reflect on LGBTQ+ experiences with empathy and respect.

Duration

2 hours

Participants

10–25 young people (ages 15–25)

Goals

- Increase understanding of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Reflect on the importance of safety and consent when sharing personal stories.
- Develop empathy through listening to LGBTQ+ narratives.
- Encourage responsible storytelling and respectful dialogue.
- Strengthen group trust and openness.

Materials

- Projector and speakers (for video clips)
- Flipchart and markers
- Sticky notes
- A4 paper and pens for each participant
- Printout of “Safety Charter” rules (optional)
- Internet connection or pre-downloaded videos

Instructions

1. Understanding LGBTQ+ Stories Through Media (30 min)

Show 2-3 short clips from movies or documentaries (e.g. *Love, Simon*, *Heartstopper*, *The Prom*, or short YouTube testimonies).

After each clip, invite participants to share:

How did you feel after watching these testimonies?

How did characters reacted to challenges?

Note key reflections on a flipchart (themes: *courage, acceptance, prejudice, support*).

2. Creating a Safe Story Space (30 min)

Introduce the idea of a Safety Charter, inspired by the example.

Ask participants: “What do we need to feel safe when someone shares a personal story?”

Collect ideas on sticky notes and group them by themes (e.g. *respect, confidentiality, no judgment*).

Write and display the agreed rules on a flipchart to stay visible throughout the training.

3. Story Sharing Circle (40 min)

Invite participants (voluntarily) to share a story, experience, or example personal or from media related to LGBTQ+ inclusion or acceptance.

Others listen silently and respectfully.

After each story, discuss:

- What did this story teach us?
- How can we respond safely and supportively when someone shares something personal?

4. Reflection and Wrap-Up (20 min)

Ask participants to write on a small paper:

- One thing they learned today.
- One thing they will do differently when listening to or sharing stories.

Collect and read some responses anonymously.

End with a group affirmation: “Every story matters, and every voice deserves respect.”

Variants

- Instead of media clips, use printed short stories or poems written by LGBTQ+ youth.
- If participants are shy, have them create anonymous written stories that others read aloud.
- For online versions, use digital sticky notes and breakout rooms for small-group discussion.
- For the ones who are not feeling comfortable to openly share the story, it could be presented anonymously through the free digital tool Canva.

Tips for facilitators

- Always emphasize voluntary sharing — no one should feel pressured.
- Use inclusive language and model openness.
- Be ready to address stereotypes or misconceptions gently but firmly.
- Prepare local support contacts or helplines in case participants want follow-up support.
- Play soft background music during reflection moments (e.g. *Khruangbin – August 10*).

Evaluation

- At the end, ask: “Did you feel safe and respected during today’s session?”
- Observe engagement, participation, and emotional tone.
- Use reflection notes to evaluate understanding and comfort levels.

Workshop 2: Training Session: Exploring Diverse Sexual Orientations Through Storytelling & Media

Partner organisation: CENTER FOR BANAT STUDIES (Serbia)

Duration

2 hours

Participants

10-15 young people (adaptable for larger/smaller groups)

Goals

- Raise awareness of diverse sexual orientations.
- Encourage empathy and respect through stories and media.
- Strengthen listening and sharing skills in a safe space.
- Reduce stereotypes and promote inclusion.

Materials

- Flipchart or whiteboard and markers
- Printed slips of paper with short prompts (see activity below)
- Projector or laptop with speakers
- Two to three short film clips (2 to 3 minutes each) showing diverse sexual orientation stories (non-graphic, youth-friendly)
- Post-it notes and pens for each participant

Preparation for facilitators

Choose short clips in advance and watch them fully, checking for suitability and safeguarding concerns.

Prepare a simple 'safety charter' template with a few starter rules in case the group needs help getting started.

Decide whether reflection will be spoken, written, or both, based on group comfort.

Instructions

Icebreaker: 'Identity Stars' (15 minutes): participants draw a constellation of 4 to 5 stars and write what matters to them (family, music, sports, friendship, dreams). Share in pairs. Debrief: identity is multi-layered, and sexual orientation is one part of identity.

Create a safety charter (15 minutes): participants suggest what they need to feel safe discussing sensitive topics. Agree shared group rules on the flipchart.

Media and reflection: 'Stories We See' (40 minutes): show 2 to 3 clips. After each clip, small groups discuss: emotions raised, challenges faced, and how others reacted. Groups share 2 to 3 insights. Facilitator draws out common themes, such as courage, stigma, acceptance, and resilience.

Storytelling: 'If You Were the Director' (35 minutes): groups draw a prompt and create a short role-play or storyboard showing how the story could unfold. Present to the room. Reflect: which choices supported respect and acceptance, and which reinforced stereotypes?

Closing reflection: 'One Word Round' (10 minutes): each participant shares one word describing how they feel.

Variants

- Instead of film clips, use songs, poems, or short news articles on LGBT+representation.
- If participants are shy, invite written reflections on Post-it notes instead of speaking.
- If time is tight, reduce to one clip and one role-play prompt.

Tips for Facilitators

- Use inclusive language, for example partner instead of boyfriend or girlfriend, unless someone specifies otherwise.
- Balance sensitive discussion with grounding and lightness, without minimising anyone's experience.
- Remind participants nobody is required to share personal experiences.

Evaluation

Closing question: Did you learn something new today? Did you feel safe sharing?

Collect anonymous Post-it notes with one takeaway and one suggestion.

Workshop 3: Sex Ed Stories – From School to College

Partner organisation: UCC98.3FM (Ireland)

Overview

This workshop starts from the reality that most people’s knowledge about sex, intimacy, gender, and relationships comes from a messy mix of sources: formal schooling, whispered conversations with friends, family silences, religious or cultural expectations, and popular culture. Rather than treating sex education as something that simply worked or failed, participants map how learning unfolded over time, with attention to gaps, contradictions, and invisible stories. The aim is not to deliver the correct curriculum, but to hold a structured, reflective, slightly playful space where LGBT+ lives and experiences are named without turning anyone into a spokesperson.

Duration

90 minutes, with flexibility to stretch slightly if the group is large. A short stretch break can be added between the timeline and manifesto sections if needed.

Participants

Works best with 12 to 20 participants, roughly 18 to 30 years old, in a physical room. One or two facilitators present.

Goals

- Create a playful, open space where stories about sex education can surface without judgement.
- Explore the transition from school to college, surfacing myths, silences and the role of culture and peer learning.
- Build a collective “map” of experience using shared boards, timelines and prompts, rather than individual testimony alone.
- Ensure that LGBT+ identities, orientations and discussions of intimacy appear explicitly in the mapping, without turning anyone into a spokesperson.
- Generate raw material (text, diagrams, quotes) that can later feed into a zine, or audio collage, if participants are comfortable with that.

Materials

- Physical room with enough space to stand in a circle and to move into small groups.
- Projector or large screen, plus a laptop with internet access.
- Online collaborative board such as Padlet, Miro or MURAL, pre-set with four simple spaces:
- Two Truths + a Lie; Story Constellation; Sex Ed Timeline; Manifesto for the Future.
- Phones or laptops for participants to post short reflections to the shared board during specific parts of the workshop.
- Export option (screenshots, PDF) so the final constellation, timeline and
- manifesto can be saved for later creative work.

Preparation for facilitators

Set up the board with clearly labelled areas and test it on the projector.

Check Wi-Fi and access issues for participants using phones.

Prepare one or two neutral starter examples in case the board is slow to fill.

Agree how you will handle heavy disclosures and know local support or signposting options.

Have a small pop culture prompt bank across different decades to help participants remember without putting anyone on the spot.

Instructions

Warm-up circle, Two Truths and a Lie (0 to 10 minutes): each person shares two true statements and one false statement about something they were taught about sex or relationships. The group guesses the lie. Keep it short and light.

Story circles to collective constellation (10 to 35 minutes) Explain that the next step is to trade short stories in pairs and then build a shared “constellation” of experience on the screen. Reassure people that they can keep things general, and that they never have to name anything they do not want to share. Invite participants to turn to a partner. Offer two prompts and ask them to spend a few minutes each on both: “The most useful thing I learned in school about sex or relationships was...” and “What I wish I had been taught is...”. After around ten minutes, ask each pair to choose one story or theme they are comfortable turning into a short, anonymous post. They type this into the Story Constellation area on the shared board using their phones or one shared device per pair. As posts appear, facilitators read them aloud and gently place each one into one of the labelled circles: Consent, Pleasure, Shame, LGBT+ visibility, Gender identity, Intimacy, Myths. Some stories may touch several circles; choose one and mention the overlap briefly. As the screen fills, point out that this messy constellation is already a collective map of how sex education actually felt, and what it did or did not cover.

Sex ed timeline, formal and informal learning (35 to 65 minutes): participants add notes into four rows: school taught me; college and peers taught me; still do not know or wish I had been taught; pop culture taught me. Small groups then discuss patterns and gaps, followed by whole-room reflection.

Wrap-up manifesto (65 to 90 minutes): each participant contributes one single-sentence line to a collective manifesto, serious or funny. Facilitators type lines as spoken, without editing. Read the manifesto aloud to close.

Facilitator notes and common challenges

Keep the tone curious rather than evaluative. Use humour carefully, laughing at awkward myths and poor teaching rather than at identities or communities. Expect a wide range of backgrounds, from no formal sex education to comprehensive programmes. Be ready for heavier disclosures, acknowledge them calmly, and avoid pulling for detail. If discussion drifts into abstract policy arguments, redirect to concrete questions: what was actually said, shown, or left unsaid? If energy dips, shorten small-group time and move earlier into the manifesto.

Evaluation

Quick feedback: Did you feel you could contribute at your own pace? What part felt most useful?

Facilitator debrief: which prompts worked, where timekeeping was tight, and whether any follow-up or signposting is needed.

Export the board outputs and store them securely. Use only with consent in future creative outputs.

Appendix

Consent and healthy intimacy: accessible guidance on consent, boundaries, and communication.

International context: UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (2018).

LGBT+ inclusion and support: relevant national and European organisations in your context.

Handling disclosures and difficult conversations: identify local youth services, counselling, or helplines in advance.

Appendix: Pop culture prompt bank

Use these prompts to help participants remember how films, television, music, books, and online spaces acted as informal sex education.

Which TV show, film, or song taught you more about sex or relationships than classes did?

Was there a character who shaped how you understood gender or sexuality, even if nobody said the word queer?

Did an online space, fandom, advice column, or creator give answers adults around you did not?

Examples across decades (optional)

1960s to 1970s: romance comics, underground magazines, early sex manuals, sexual revolution imagery.

1980s: music videos, AIDS public information campaigns, teen films and comedies, magazine problem pages.

1990s: coming-of-age novels, after-school specials, soap storylines on pregnancy and HIV, early forums.

2000s: Queer as Folk, The L Word, advice websites and blogs, early YouTube.

2010s to 2020s: Sex Education and other streaming series, TikTok and YouTube educators, podcasts about relationships.

Workshop 4: FAKE ME / BREAK THE NEWS

Partner organisation: JOUÏR PODCASTS (France)

Overview

In today's media-saturated world, narratives shape how we understand ourselves and others—often reinforcing harmful stereotypes or spreading misinformation. This workshop is designed to strengthen media literacy skills, with a focus on how queer identities and youth activism are represented, distorted, or erased in public discourse.

Through interactive activities, critical dialogue, and creative exercises, participants will learn to identify fake news, deconstruct media messages, and reclaim the narrative from a position of agency and truth. Together, we will foster a collaborative and inclusive space for reflection, resistance, and collective learning.

Duration

2 hours including evaluation

Participants

unlimited

Goals

- Develop media literacy skills
- Critically examine media narratives
- Distinguish fake news
- Empower participants to reclaim the narrative
- Foster dialogue and collective learning in a safe and collaborative space

Materials

- Large whiteboard, chalkboard, or poster paper for group brainstorming
- Markers or pens (various colors)
- Sticky notes for anonymous reflections or digital tool (e.g., Woodclap, Mentimeter)
- 6 written press headlines : 3 real + 3 fake ones
- Printed handouts or digital access to activity instructions (optional)

Preparation for facilitators

Choose three media examples in advance, ideally relevant to the participants' context.

Check that examples are age-appropriate and do not contain content that could put participants at risk.

Decide how anonymous contributions will be handled and stored, and whether any outputs will be kept after the session.

Instructions

Part 1 - Decoding fake news

Mini Media Game: "Framed?" (20 min)

Display 6 press headlines : 3 real ones, 3 fake that you make up, related to:

- Gender identity
- Queer rights
- Youth activism

- Group discussion :

- Which are fake? Which are true ?
- Who's behind each message?
- Who benefits from the message or distortion?
- How can we tell what's real?

Tip: Use visuals/screenshots to make this engaging.

Your anti-fake news charter (30 min)

Facilitator explains:

- What fake news is (brief definition)
- The importance of individual responsibility in fighting misinformation

Prompt participants with questions like:

- Have you ever shared something online that turned out to be false?
- How do you usually check if something is true?

Split into pairs or small groups. Based on the previous step, write a simple list of 5–7 rules or questions to ask before trusting or sharing a news article.

Examples:

- Who is the source?
- Is the headline exaggerated?
- Can I find the same info on another reliable site?

Encourage them to keep it short and practical — like a personal checklist.

- Ask each group to quickly share their list.
- Write these on the board or a shared doc to build a common group checklist.
- Conclude with : “*Always verify before you share. You are the first line of defense against fake news.*”

Part 2 - Media Deconstruction Lab (35 minutes)

Rewrite the News

In small groups, pick one real article or social media post and rewrite it:

- From a queer-positive angle
- As a satire or parody
- As a clickbait lie

Share and explain the intention behind each rewrite.

Debrief

- What strategies do media use to mislead or manipulate?
- How can we reclaim the narrative?

Part 3 - Reflections & Tools (30 minutes)

Discussion: Who Gets to Tell the Truth? (15 min)

Initiate and facilitate the dialogue:

- Whose stories are erased or doubted?
- How do queer voices get distorted or questioned in media?
- What lies do the media tell us about queer people? And about youth?

Wrap-up exercise: One Truth, One Lie (15 minutes)

Everyone writes:

- One truth they want to be heard
- One lie they are tired of hearing about people like them

Invite a few to share. If safer, collect anonymously. Optional: Use a word cloud tool (menti etc.) to display responses.

Variants

You can choose to use digital tools to instantly display participants' answers to questions instead of post-it notes or even dialogue and debate sessions.

Alternative exercise for creativity and empathy, about narrative power :

Role-Play Simulation Exercise : stepping into the shoes of those who create or spread fake news.

Participants are divided into small groups. Each team is assigned (or chooses) a role from the following fictional personas:

- Clickbait Content Creator
- Political Propagandist
- Concerned-but-Misinformed Citizen
- Activist Fighting Back with Facts
- Fact-Checker or Journalist
- Social Media Influencer Looking for Engagement

Each team receives a short scenario (e.g., “a controversial queer youth protest goes viral”) and their assigned role.

Their task: Create a short social media post or headline from their assigned perspective. + A short explanation of why their character would share it that way (motives, strategy, goals)

Each group presents their post.

Facilitator (or peers) respond with analysis questions:

- What's emotionally manipulative about this?
- What part of it might be true? What's misleading?
- Who benefits from this version of the story?
- How would you respond if you saw this post online?

Tips for facilitators

We encourage you to prepare examples of answers to open-ended questions in order to stimulate discussion and allow other ideas to emerge. Do not hesitate to share your own thoughts and personal examples about truth & lies.

If you are several facilitators you can lead the exercises in turn / One can lead an exercise while the other is already preparing the next sub-activity.

Evaluation

At the end of the workshop, ask participants whether they felt safe sharing their thoughts to the group. Ask them if the workshop helped them to change their perspective on media narratives and critical tools of resistance they can mobilize. Keep a few minutes (5-10) for this feedback.

Workshop 5: Don't Feed the Normie: Pop-Cultural and Everyday Encounters with Norms, Social Expectations, and Customs

Partner organisation: UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA (Slovenia)

Overview

The workshop “Don't Feed the Normie” is grounded in the concept of the normie, a term that originated in internet slang and has acquired multiple, evolving meanings across different contexts. Understanding these meanings is essential to engaging critically with everyday language and digital culture, particularly as they relate to questions of inclusion, identity, and social norms.

The workshop aims to engage with the everyday vocabulary and pop-cultural references familiar to younger audiences and, through that, address issues of exclusion experienced by queer and other marginalized individuals in a way that is both humorous and sensitive.

Duration

2 hours (adaptable)

Participants

8-20 (adaptable)

Goals

- Explore how “normal” is constructed through everyday language, pop culture, and social expectations.
- Notice how norms shape belonging, exclusion, and identity, including for LGBT+ young people.
- Build confidence to question “common sense” narratives without shaming participants.

Materials

- Flipchart or whiteboard and markers
- projector or screen (optional)
- paper and pens
- Post-it notes (optional)
- phones or a simple audio recorder if you want to capture short reflections.

Preparation for facilitators

Read through the workshop text and choose one or two local, accessible examples of “normie” behaviour or expectations (for example school rules, dress codes, family scripts, online trends). Decide in advance how you will handle mocking or stereotyping so humour lands on systems, not on people.

Workshop flow

Structured as a four-part interactive session, the workshop combines critical discussion, media analysis, and creative storytelling:

Part 1 - Introduction to Terms: Participants explore the meanings of normie, norminess, and normality, reflecting on how social norms and expectations shape daily interactions.

Part 2 - Normies in Pop Culture: Through short film clips, memes, and online materials, participants analyze portrayals of normies in popular and internet culture, considering how the term’s meaning shifts across contexts, with special attention to queer perspectives.

Part 3 - Pair Work: Participants share short, anonymized personal stories about moments when they acted like normies or encountered normies in everyday life, reflecting on mechanisms of social exclusion and conformity.

Part 4 - Creative Reworking (“Normie Podcast”): In pairs, participants adapt selected stories into humorous or fictionalized short pieces inspired by pop culture and record them as brief audio vignettes for a collective Normie Podcast.

The workshop uses audiovisual materials (*film clips, memes, and audio examples*), written handouts, and optional recording tools. It provides a safe, reflective, and playful space for examining how norms shape everyday interactions and how they are represented in popular culture.

Facilitator notes

Basic definitions of the term “normie” can be found on reliable online sources such as Meriam-Webster dictionary, on Wikipedia, or on Cambridge Dictionary.

Participants are invited to view various examples of the depiction of ‘normies’ in popular culture. Some examples (*workshop facilitators and attendants can use their own examples*):

1980s print/media. Normie (*and the variant spelling Normis*) appears in the 1987 film *The Garbage Pail Kids Movie*. A character warns: “Stay out of the Normies.” “What are Normies?” “Normal people.”

1980s–1990s disability & recovery circles. In print journalism, normies was used by people with disabilities to mean able-bodied people (e.g., *Washington Post*, 1984) and by recovery communities to mean non-addicts or “normal drinkers” (e.g., *The Oregonian*, 1988).

Meme culture (*mid-2000s -> present*): On anonymous boards (*esp. 4chan*), normie became a boundary word, signaling insider status. It has been appropriated also by far-right groups (*alt-right, incel movement*).

Wednesday TV series: normie describe ordinary humans who interact with the supernatural outcasts attending Nevermore Academy

Workshop 6: MAKE ME / AUTO-FICTION IS A LIE YOU LIVE IN

Partner organisation: JOUÏR PODCASTS (France)

Overview

This workshop explores the blurry lines between fact and fiction through the lens of queer imagination, personal voice, and storytelling. Using the form of auto-fiction, participants will write and record stories that are part truth, part invention — embracing exaggeration, creative distortion, and emotional honesty as tools for both self-expression and self-protection.

Together, we will play with narrative perspective, experiment with audio formats, and reflect on the ways marginalized voices use fiction not to obscure the truth, but to reveal deeper, more complicated realities. This is a space for creative risk, thoughtful listening, and reclaiming the stories we tell — even when they're not entirely “true.”

Duration

2 hours

Participants

unlimited

Goals

- Explore autofiction/personal storytelling as a creative tool
- Experiment with truth-twisting and identity play
- Develop audio storytelling skills
- Encourage empathy and perspective-shifting

Materials

- Pens, pencils, and markers
- Notebooks or loose paper for writing prompts
- Smartphones with voice recording apps (1 per participant or per pair)
- Speakers or portable audio playback device
- Sticky notes for final exercise
- Portable audio recorders or microphones (optional)
- Whiteboard or flipchart + markers for group discussion points (optional)
- Variant : Materials for a DIY zine (optional)

Instructions

Part 1 - Intro Discussion - “Everyday Lies“ (15 min)

Prompt discussion questions:

- When have you lied to make your life easier?
- When have you been lied to and believed it?
- Are some lies necessary for survival in a normative society ?

Optional : Write down ideas and reactions on anonymous post-it notes (optional : use a digital tool to collect answers). Place the post-it notes on a wall or board, arranging them according to the topics covered. Discuss the results freely.

Part 2 - Prompt Writing: Untrue but Honest (30 minutes)

Prompt: A story about me that is part truth, part lies.

Guidance:

- Use first person (I).
- Include two distortions, exaggerations, or invented details.
- Make it emotional, funny, surreal, or protective.
- Do not harm others with your lie. Keep it about you.

Examples:

- *I came out at five, in front of my whole school.*
- *I have a twin who stole my identity, but no one noticed.*

Write for 15 minutes. Share in pairs or trios for 10 minutes, then optionally share a few with the full group.

Part 3 - Make the News: Audio Creation (60 minutes)

Step 1: Record someone else's story (20 minutes)

In pairs, swap stories, then record your partner's story in one of these formats:

- Personal voice memo
- News anchor voice (deadpan, serious)
- Experimental (robotic, whispered, poetic, dramatic)
- Optional: add background sound (sirens, café noise, crowd, static, jingle).

Step 2: Share audio with consent (15 minutes)

Play recordings in a relaxed listening session. Confirm consent again before playing anything.

Step 3: Group reflection (25 minutes)

- What sounded true? What felt performed?
- How did voice and tone affect the story?
- What happens when we hear our story in someone else's voice?
- How do queer people use distortion as safety, play, or protest?

Part 4 - Final Reflection & Wrap-Up (30 minutes)

Creative close: Fake Me / Real Me (15 minutes)

Everyone writes or says:

- One thing they have faked to survive
- One part of themselves they are claiming as *real* today

Closing circle (15 minutes)

Check-out question: What truth are you taking away, even if it is wrapped in a lie?

Optional take-home idea: collect the stories and audio links in a shared document or via a QR code.

Variants

1. You can archive the stories created during the workshop
 - In an online folder shared among consenting participants
 - In a DIY zine created collectively as part or continuation of the workshop.
This take-home zine can contain the stories and/or audio creations by adding a QR code or digital link.
2. You can add / replace part of the dialogue session with the exercise « The Spectrum Line » :
 - Create a physical spectrum line across the room with one end labeled “Always Harmful” and the other “Sometimes Necessary”.
 - Read out statements (e.g., “I told someone I was straight to feel safe”, “I shared something online that I wasn’t sure was true”)
 - Ask participants to position themselves along the line.
 - Encourage embodied reflection and discussion about the complexity of lying in social and media contexts.

Tips for facilitators

Take the time to establish an atmosphere of comfort and trust in the group by emphasising the framework (consent and confidentiality). If needed, establish community agreement (safety chart).

Prepare examples in advance to stimulate discussion and allow other ideas to emerge.

Encourage, but don’t force sharing. Make space for quiet reflection or alternate ways to participate (e.g technical involvement in the recording).

Be trauma-informed : auto-fiction can stir up real emotions. Be attentive to participant reactions.

Evaluation

Take a few minutes to collect participants’ reactions to the workshop.

You can ask them a few questions, for example :

- How did it feel to hear your story in someone else’s voice?
- What surprised you about what you created or shared?
- What did you learn about your voice — literal or metaphorical?

Workshop 7: Queer Codes in the Straight World

Partner organisation: UCC98.3FM (Ireland)

Overview

This session invites participants to re-read familiar films through a queer lens. The focus is not on proving a film is 'definitely queer' or arguing canon. Instead, participants notice coding, hints, and erasures, then create short recorded responses.

Duration

2 hours

Participants

8 to 20 participants, roughly 18 to 30 years old, in a physical room. Two facilitators present.

Goals

Practise looking at mainstream cinema through a queer lens, noticing how intimacy, desire, and gender nonconformity are implied, mocked, punished, or normalised.

Spot patterns that repeat across decades so participants feel less alone and more aware that queer lives have always been present, even when coded.

Create space for disagreement and speculation without forcing a single correct interpretation.

Generate short recorded fragments that can become raw material for podcasts, sound pieces, or zine work.

Materials

- Laptop with internet access and speakers
- Projector or large screen
- Access to YouTube or local video files
- A shared online board or simple document for group notes (projected)
- Phones or a simple audio recorder for the recording segment
- Optional: printed stills from selected films in case screens fail

Preparation for facilitators

Choose three to five film clips in advance that show queer subtext, tension, or erasure. Aim for a spread across decades and genres. Each clip should be 2 to 5 minutes long and work even if participants do not know the full film.

- Test sound and projection beforehand.
- Prepare a simple decoding grid: What we see; How it is framed; What it might suggest; How it might land for a queer viewer; What is missing or denied.
- Agree how you will handle heavy disclosures, and set boundaries for culture war style arguments.

Instructions

Arrival and framing (0 to 10 minutes): welcome participants, introduce the project, and set simple ground rules. Emphasise curiosity and play. No one is forced to share personal stories.

Anchor clip, Top Gun and the queer reading (10 to 25 minutes): show the beach volleyball scene from Top Gun without introduction. Ask open questions: what stands out, who is on display, who does the camera linger on? Then show the ‘Top Gun’ monologue from Sleep With Me. Discuss what changes when you take a queer reading seriously. Keep focus on how multiple meanings can coexist.

First, show the beach volleyball scene from Top Gun without introduction. Let people simply watch. After the clip, ask very open questions: What stands out? Who is on display? Who is the camera in love with? Take a few quick, light comments. Then show the “Tarantino explains Top Gun” monologue from Sleep With Me. Explain that this is one famous example of a queer reading that has circulated in pop culture for years.

Invite a short discussion: If you take that reading seriously for a moment, what changes in how you see the scene? Do you agree, partly agree, strongly disagree? What does this example tell us about the idea of coding and subtext in mainstream films? Keep it moving and avoid letting the session get stuck on whether this specific reading is correct. The point is to show that the same scene can hold multiple meanings, some of which may have mattered a lot to queer viewers.

Language for what we are doing (25 to 35 minutes): introduce a short set of terms as tools, not rules, such as subtext, coding, plausible deniability, queerbaiting, 'no homo' humour, camp, and punishment. Invite participants to add their own language and capture it on the shared board.

Small-group decoding round one (35 to 55 minutes): groups of 3 to 4 watch a pre-selected clip. On the second viewing, they fill the decoding grid. Encourage them to tie feelings and instincts to specific moments in the scene.

Gallery share and pattern spotting (55 to 70 minutes): groups share key observations. Facilitators capture keywords under loose headings (desire, shame, joke, punishment, friendship, closet, denial). Identify repeating patterns.

Short break (70 to 80 minutes): allow a pause and check in quietly with anyone who looks unsettled. **Small-group decoding round two, participants' own examples** (80 to 100 minutes): groups bring an example from a film they know. If a clip is easy to find, keep it short. Otherwise, participants can describe the scene. Use a lighter version of the decoding grid and welcome disagreement.

Creative response and recording (100 to 115 minutes): each group creates a short audio response (60 to 90 seconds). Options include a mock DVD commentary, a love letter to a coded character, a mini manifesto about what the film could have shown, or a brief dialogue between the written character and a fully out version of that character. Record on a phone. Clarify consent and future use.

Closing circle (115 to 120 minutes) Bring the group back into one circle. Ask each person to share one short sentence starting with something like: "One thing I will look for differently in films now is..." or "One way I feel more seen after today is...". Thank them, remind them that their readings can be valid even when they are not reflected on screen, and briefly flag any follow-up plans such as sharing edited audio fragments, a zine page, or a next session.

Tips for Facilitators

Keep the workshop anchored in specific film moments, then let interpretation grow from there. If discussion drifts into abstract ‘for or against’ positions, return to concrete questions: what is on screen, what is left out, who is centred, and whose feelings are taken seriously. Watch for an imbalance between participants with film theory language and those without. Invite quieter voices in with grounded prompts. Be prepared for heavier disclosures and avoid pulling for detail. Use humour carefully, keeping it aimed at film-making choices rather than vulnerable identities. If energy dips, shorten the second decoding round and move earlier into the creative response.

Evaluation

- Quick written or digital feedback: did the session change how they think about films they already know?
- Did participants feel able to contribute without specialist knowledge?
- Would they be interested in hearing an edited sound piece made from recordings (if relevant)?
- Facilitators note which clips worked best and where discussion became stuck, to adjust next time.

Appendix: Suggested films and clips

These lists are suggestions, not rules. Choose films that suit your cultural context and safeguarding needs, and always check clips in advance.

Core clips for the opening discussion

Film	Scene	Link
Dir: Tony Scott Top Gun (1986)	beach volleyball scene.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okyLAKcIleo
Dir: Rory Kelly Sleep With Me (1994)	Quentin Tarantino monologue about Top Gun.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tNF34tdT_A

Classic and coded Hollywood

Film	Scene	Link
Dir: Alfred Hitchcock Rebecca (1940)	Mrs Danvers in Rebecca's bedroom.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SY6vz6bVILs
Dir: Alfred Hitchcock Rope (1948)	opening or interrogation scenes.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtdOgTiFxWY
Dir: Alfred Hitchcock Strangers on a Train (1951)	Bruno attaches himself to Guy with intense fixation.	https://youtu.be/-479920Xx-yg?si=fhsSFtRjoBsalhl2
Dir: Nicholas Ray Rebel Without a Cause (1948)	the bond between Jim and Plato.	https://youtu.be/nqz5wwsX-nUE?si=iNlfhomgvBiTFkW4
Dir: William Wyler Ben Hur (1959)	reunion and rivalry between Ben Hur and Messala.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LVp4tl5O4
Dir: Richard Brooks Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958)	Brick's blocked desire and silence around Skipper.	https://youtu.be/06PLAU-gAUZ0?si=FC_irgB8gMR-wYCR8
Dir: William Wyler The Children's Hour (1961)	accusation, gossip, and the power of homophobia.	https://youtu.be/gbvfsGZzR-9w?si=E9AovkEFnUXvjv4d

Horror, fantasy, and the monster closet

Film	Scene	Link
Dir: James Whale Bride of Frankenstein (1935)	camp and queer sensibility.	https://youtu.be/o1Izq-E3o-7Y?si=k6beLXqMh-jq9WFo4
Dir: Don Siegel Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)	paranoia and allegory.	https://youtu.be/w2X-Wa1XuKSI?si=6D-V_4OvmJhKMire9
Dir: Jack Sholder A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge (1985)	often read as explicitly queer.	https://youtu.be/ncO4Ow-8be2U?si=CTmpw4YN-AsLMmdwN
Dir: Tony Scott The Hunger (1983)	vampire triangle, desire, ageing.	https://youtu.be/d1T8I_9o-QB4?si=HvUsoVKop-Ki-I7-C
Dir: William Wyler Interview with the Vampire (1994)	domestic life and shifting power.	https://youtu.be/LIm8Hf-wnmVE?si=qsjliCNYCB-FqazTV
Dir: Jim Sharman The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)	overtly queer and transgressive.	https://youtu.be/

Crime, thriller, and ‘macho’ cinema

Film	Scene	Link
Dir: Anthony Minghella The Talented Mr Ripley (1999)	fixation, jealousy, desire under a polite surface.	https://youtu.be/Gg7wIE-BrjAU?si=NS4CBTt6ZIay-Vo1N
Dir: Joel Coen Miller’s Crossing (1990)	triangles and coded tensions.	https://youtu.be/6C54l-sR6O00?si=G3yY-4bEsWNGeP95Y
Dir: David Cronenberg Eastern Promises (2007)	bathroom scene and relationships.	https://youtu.be/8-rFIK-fWrKc?si=ZOQV0KxP-fzHZhZvv
Dir: Martin Scorsese The Departed (2006)	surveillance, secrecy, possible queer readings.	https://youtu.be/zx7U4in-L0Bo?si=EdjLbhgmhIHArIdU
Dir: Bennett Miller Foxcatcher (2014)	power, class, and uneasy closeness.	https://youtu.be/QLHc-fLDRBe4?si=cOKIFcE-bAKzncHLM

Drama and arthouse suggestions

Film	Scene	Link
Dir: Peter Weir Dead Poets Society (1989)	intense bonds and the costs of nonconformity.	https://youtu.be/28Vgq-S7Vk2I?si=1uF42KZc1i-UFRsIO
Dir: Jon Avnet Fried Green Tomatoes (1991)	attachment often read as romantic.	https://youtu.be/aP3zU6_8S0o?si=G-dW2B75m5-cqD2cv
Dir: Ridley Scott Thelma and Louise (1991)	solidarity with queer undertones for some viewers.	https://youtu.be/SX-bUNuTQJds?si=zgXskIv-fUmbPX0Kd
Dir: David Lynch Mulholland Drive (2001)	desire, identity splits, queer intimacy.	https://youtu.be/Ad3L-ZedqmVY?si=g_wMPx-hiXwFYsKEb
Dir: Jane Campion The Power of the Dog (2021)	desire and performance of masculinity.	https://youtube.com/shorts/uzCWVAK-UR5Y?si=RUVwakYcnjb-z2Oty

Animation and family films

Film	Scene	Link
Dir: Chris Butler and Sam Fell ParaNorman (2012)	casual reveal of a gay character.	https://youtu.be/Nel883o_6SA?si=N54lG-ZL7W1HBMEOp
Dir: Jon Avnet The Mitchells vs the Machines (1991)	attachment often read as romantic.	https://youtu.be/c322KVjn-hTQ?si=IUtbvb_PILA5ruu5

Appendix: Trans representation clip prompts

Format: Category; scene; prompt; link. Check all clips in advance and use content warnings where appropriate.

Anything’s Possible (2022): Kelsa and Khal first kiss

Category: Affirming, ordinary romance

Scene: Hallway first kiss, shot like a teen romcom with a Black trans girl centred without tragedy.

Prompt: What does being seen look like when the film frames it as ordinary teenage romance?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFYvDtFcB1s>

Alice Junior (2019): trailer

Category: Affirming, playful

Scene: Trailer introduces Alice, a trans YouTuber in a conservative Catholic school, focused on getting her first kiss.

Prompt: What changes when a trans girl is allowed to be silly, romantic, and messy, instead of a tragedy or lesson?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2e7VSwgOlc>

Tangerine (2015): Alexandra singing in the club

Category: Affirming, gritty, joyous

Scene: A club performance that holds glamour, exhaustion, hustle, and friendship in the same frame.

Prompt: How does this scene show trans women as working artists and friends, not symbols or jokes?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZbXA4lyCtqoKpocWicdn-54W6HU-VZ3RUz>

Disclosure (2020): trailer

Category: Affirming, critical meta-view

Scene: Trailer cuts through decades of trans representation in film and TV.

Prompt: Whose stories repeat as jokes, villains, or victims, and who barely appears? How does that feel to watch?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSgvWixY-ZQ>

The Danish Girl (2015): 'role play' scene

Category: Complex, respectable but centred on suffering

Scene: Gender experimentation framed as tender but also staged for a cis gaze.

Prompt: What feels intimate and recognisable, and what feels designed for cis viewers to admire suffering from a distance?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hcGeToc17I>

Girl (2018): official trailer

Category: Complex, dysphoria framed as pain

Scene: Trailer emphasises ballet training and bodily strain, often criticised for turning dysphoria into spectacle.

Prompt: When does the camera feel with her, and when does it feel like inspection?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKrI0xJXIR4>

Ace Ventura: Pet Detective (1994): Einhorn reveal

Category: Hostile, disgust gag

Scene: Ace reacts with extreme disgust and contamination imagery.

Prompt: What is the joke here, and how is the trans body framed as dirty or deceptive?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5I3SoLZyaY>

The Crying Game (1992): Dil reveal

Category: Complex, sensationalised twist

Scene: Reveal framed through the cis male lead's shock.

Prompt: Whose reaction are we asked to share? How is transness turned into a twist?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvC4sDHEOaw>

Sleepaway Camp (1983): final reveal

Category: Hostile, transness fused with horror

Scene: Final reveal uses costume and sound to frame the body as monstrous.

Prompt: How do costume, sound, and camera work together to construct monstrosity?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/lsL0QqleDwo>

The Silence of the Lambs (1991): 'Goodbye Horses' dance

Category: Hostile, villain-coded gender nonconformity

Scene: Buffalo Bill dances and poses, iconic but tied to serial killer framing.

Prompt: What is the scene trying on: gender, power, fantasy? Why has it become camp for some queer audiences despite the framing?

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPEvOBij8YI>

Workshop 8: AIR YOUR THOUGHTS

Partner organisation: UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA (Slovenia)

Overview

The workshop is designed to help a group of young people prepare and record a podcast where they discuss LGBT+ issues they are interested through reflecting on a chosen film. Using film as a basis for reflection and discussion, creates a jumping off point that helps participants relate their own experience and opinions to the discussed media. This also enables them to potentially feel more comfortable sharing their opinions and aspects of their own experiences, because they do not have to directly share their personal stories and feelings in a group they might be unfamiliar with but can instead lean on the events and characters in the films.

Duration

2 + 4 h (debate, script writing workshop + recording of the podcast and jingle, editing)

Participants

Participants : 3-6

Goals

- Encourage in-depth reflection on LGBT+ past and present.
- Develop critical thinking about popular culture, mainstream narratives, and less visible perspectives.
- Build moderating and communication skills.
- Increase confidence in expressing opinions in a respectful group setting.
- Develop basic technical and production skills for podcast creation.

Materials

- A screening room or suitable viewing space
- Paper or posters and markers
- Flipchart or whiteboard (optional)
- Computer for script writing (optional)
- Recording and editing equipment (this can be simple, for example a smartphone and laptop, or a more professional setup with microphones, an audio interface, and DAW software)

Preparations for facilitators

Select the film or materials with the group in mind, including age, interests, and safeguarding considerations.

Prepare a short set of prompts to structure discussion and avoid unhelpful debate patterns.

Decide in advance how consent, anonymity, and distribution will be handled.

If possible, test the recording setup in the same room.

Instructions

Part 1: Preparation and script (2 hours)

Facilitated debate (1 hour): discuss the chosen film, topics, and points of interest.

Participants write bullet points of what they want to include. Compare notes and agree a shortlist of topics for a balanced conversation.

Loose script and roles (1 hour): agree the order of topics, rough arguments under each topic, and a planned timeframe. Assign roles, including a moderator who keeps time and supports flow while also participating.

Part 2: Recording and editing (4 hours)

Recording basics (1 hour): introduce equipment and set-up, including how to create a suitable recording environment and how to choose equipment based on the number of participants.

Record and edit (3 hours): record the episode and edit it, or prepare clear instructions for someone else to edit. Use free software such as Audacity if needed. Cover simple distribution options at the end.

Variants

- Use one film, several films, a broader pop culture theme, or an academic framework, depending on the group.
- Run it alongside an event, such as a symposium, film festival, or cinema screening, where participants may also engage with filmmakers.
- If time is limited, produce a short 'pilot' episode with minimal editing and a simple structure.

Tips for facilitators

Start with concrete questions if participants are reserved: what happened, what changed, why did a character act that way?

Move to broader questions: what spoke to you, what did not, what message do you think the film offers?

Finish with summing-up questions: does the film repeat or resist familiar narratives, and how does it represent the LGBT+ community?

Keep discussion balanced by inviting quieter participants in without putting them under pressure.

Evaluation

Short debrief immediately after recording: what worked, what was challenging, what would they change next time?

Optional follow-up session once the edit is complete: listen together and reflect on both content and process.

Conclusion

These method sheets bring together approaches tested by partner organisations across the Beyond the Rainbow project. They are designed for facilitators working with young adults in settings that range from youth groups to college and community spaces. Each session is built to be participatory, consent-led, and adaptable. If you change examples, timings, or activities to suit your context, keep a short record of what you changed and why. That shared learning is how the guide stays practical and improves over time.

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