



## GRIS and afterwards...

### For an ongoing impact!

Your students have recently had GRIS volunteers come to their school and you would like to offer them an opportunity to integrate what they have learned during the workshop. Here is a tool that may be of interest to you and which offers some issues that could be raised with your students. This document is based on a method entitled « *The art of structured discussion* ». This method consists of a progressive approach and is made up of four steps. According to the proposed order, you will bring your students to think about what they may do on a daily basis to fight against homophobia in their school.

A promotional graphic for the Simple Plan Foundation prize. It features a pink circle with the GRIS logo, a blue circle with the text "what is your PLAN", and a large yellow and blue text "TO STOP HOMOPHOBIA?". A circular photo shows five young people standing together. At the bottom, it says "Organize a project to fight against homophobia" and "a \$2,000 prize to be won for your school!". The Simple Plan Foundation logo is in the bottom left. A small line of text at the bottom right reads "Graphic design: Jonathan Fortin for Six Degrees Ltd".

Every year, GRIS- Montréal gives a prize, in collaboration with the Simple Plan Foundation, to a school whose students will have set up a project to fight against homophobia. The projects are submitted to a jury who will select the school who will be awarded the bursary. For all of the details go to : [www.gris.ca/english](http://www.gris.ca/english)

## General objective

Young people are invited to think about what they have experienced when GRIS volunteers came to their school to hold a workshop.

## Specific objectives

At the end of the meeting, the students will be able to:

1. bring to light the facts they experienced during the GRIS workshop,
2. express themselves, in a group setting, as to what they have experienced during the GRIS workshop,
3. interpret the information that came out during the GRIS workshop,
4. make suggestions as to possible ways of reducing homophobia, more specifically, in their school environment.

## Greeting of the participants and openness to the topic (5 min.)

For example: « Last month, we had two volunteers from GRIS-Montréal drop by and I would like to discuss, as a group, their visit ».

## Structured discussion (1h05)

If the period is shorter or longer, you simply have to eliminate some of the questions or give more time to students to answer questions. If you eliminate questions, make sure that you raise the four specific objectives and to abide by the given order. The order of the proposed questions is very important as it is based on the method « *structured discussion* » (Stanfield, 2003, p.20). If you digress from the rules, you will not achieve the general objective and the discussion will not be as efficient.

It is important to ask the students to raise their hand and to respect the opinion of others. You will be playing the role of facilitator to favour and facilitate discussion and not the role of an expert on the topic. You should not answer the questions or attempt to influence your students' answers. Here is the order in which you should raise the questions with the group.

## SEQUENCE OF THE DISCUSSION

### **Phase One: Questions pertaining to observation (15 min.)**

You bring up one question at a time and allow the greatest number of students to express themselves while respecting the time allotted for the meeting. It is recommended to ask everyone to answer the first question so as to involve everyone in the discussion right at the outset. This step is to get the facts out. Questions may thus bear on what the students have seen and heard. In that sense, you must guide them.

#### Bringing to light the facts of the meeting which they have experienced during the GRIS Workshop

- Who came to see us?
- What did you hear? What did we talk about?
- What information did you find striking?
- Which moments do you remember the most from the workshop?
- Which sentences (ideas) do you still have in mind?

### **Phase Two: Questions conducive to reflecting upon (20 min.)**

This step involves feelings, moods, memories or idea association. It touches upon the students' emotional faculty. Homosexuality being a topic which triggers lots of emotions, it is important that you award more time to these questions. You must favour and encourage all of the students to partake. It is important to create a climate of trust so that they feel at ease to express themselves, whether the comments are positive or negative. Everyone deserves to be heard. Please note that if the expression of what was felt is not rich in content then the next phase, namely the interpretation phase (the next phase) will be that much more difficult. It is thus very important to abide by the previously stated rules.

### Expressing, in a group setting, what they felt during the GRIS workshop

- What did you feel after you found out that two homosexual persons would come to talk to you?
- Was there a time during the workshop that you felt an emotion, and if so which one? (e.g. sadness, compassion, rage, disgust, ...)
- What touched you the most?
- What surprised you the most?
- What made you feel the most uneasy?
- What did you find the most difficult to hear?
- Did you disconnect? If so, at what time?
- What did you feel after the workshop?

### **Phase Three: Questions which involve interpretation (15 min.)**

The key word during this phase is: **why?** This phase allows the students to make sense of the topic.

The questions asked allow the students to make sense to all of the emotions expressed during the reflection period and allows to understand why the GRIS workshops are important.

### Interpreting the information which came out during the GRIS workshop

- At which point did the testimony make you think the most? Make you question yourself as to your opinion?
- Which similarities do you find in your own life with the testimony?
- What were, according to you, the reasons for this workshop?
- In what way did this testimony confront you with respect to your opinion and your values?
- In what way did this testimony allow you to reinforce what you already believed in?
- What are the major points which came out?

#### **Phase Four: Questions which have to do with decision-making (15 min.)**

It is during this phase that you will be inviting the students to identify possible actions to diminish homophobia at school, to look over again the preceding elements and to use them to make voluntary choices. It is not necessary that the answers be given out loud. To maximize results, it is recommended to have the students write their ideas on a piece of paper. Only those who have volunteered are asked to share their answers in the wider group. This is what concludes the discussion. In line with the GRIS-Simple Plan Foundation Award, you could invite the students to set up their own project to fight against homophobia of their own doing.

#### Suggesting possible ways to diminish homophobia in one's environment

- If you hear someone being insulted at school, what do you do?
- If someone confides in you that he or she thinks being homosexual how do you react?
- What could we do to change our behaviour and attitude to help homosexual and those who do not correspond to the gender stereotypes to feel better in our school?
- What could we do in our school to diminish homophobia?

#### **Conclusion (5 min.)**

The closing of this activity is just as important as the opening. You must congratulate the students, thank them and invite them to pursue the thought process and their ideas.

For example: "I think that this discussion has made us go forward a lot as to our opinion regarding homosexuality. I hope that you are motivated to transform some ideas into concrete actions to fight against homophobia."