

Creating Safe Space

An adult class presented by the Menno Pride Committee

**Using a resource from the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT (BMC-LGBT) Interests: *Safe Zone Training*



Welcome, Overview,
Introductions

Creating our own “Safe Zone”

- What is a “Safe Zone”?
- Vulnerability of LGBTQ persons: “Dos” and “Do nots” for interacting to LGBTQ persons

Agreements/Assumptions for the work

- We are all here with a desire to create spaces that are safer for lgbtq persons that is free of injustice, prejudice, and harassment
- Always consider there may be an LGBTQ person in the room
- Feel free to speak and ask questions even if you don’t have it all figured out
- Help each other learn new things
- Be respectful to each other and the differing experiences we have

Module 1 Exercise 4 : Assessing the Current Environment

What PMC has in place that is welcoming	What PMC has to work on
“If you’re new here... we welcome all... “ posted in bulletin and on the website	Desire to get to this goal: that all members, all participants, being comfortable to share their full identities
Rainbow heart (indication of inclusion)	Menstrual supplies available in ALL restrooms
All-user restroom	Add “gender expression” to welcoming statement
	Consider the pronouns we use, and that are used in our texts, for God
	Adding an option to include preferred pronouns to nametags, directory, bulletin

Module 3 Exercise 3 : Benefits Approach

Goal: to gain the capacity to speak to issues of equality and justice from a benefits perspective.

Questions:

1. Why do you want your (church) to be a safe and welcoming place for LGBTQ+ (persons)?
2. Who would benefit, and how?

Mennonites living out our beliefs for peace and justice.

Churches can be welcoming, affirming, allies. Living this out publicly benefits not only our congregation but the larger community/world.

In a church community where LGBTQ+ persons are welcome, persons of other specific identities, marginalized groups, may feel more welcome.

Breaks down the walls that church "is not the place" to talk about sexuality, etc. Christianity ≠ legalism.

Mennonites are catching up (or are caught up) with other denominations/welcoming churches.

If our church is a safe zone, who would benefit and how? (Zoom class notes)

- Everyone feels valued
- You never know what you miss out on: more people and gifts involved in the church
- God speaks through everyone, without certain voices we are limited
- Life is more rich when experienced through different lenses
- Jesus modeled inclusiveness, following Jesus means doing this too

Module 4 : Action Items

Category	Action	Who is responsible
MCC	PMC continue to work on letter from MennoPride and share with other congregations	
PMC congregation	History and storytelling: creating a shared narrative	
MCC	Collecting PMC congregational support: signatures, actions, fundraising...	
Youth at PMC	Have a Safe Zone type training specifically for youth leaders at PMC (one possible resource: Dove's Nest)	Sunday school leaders
All who join events	Normalizing use of pronouns: write on name tags, name tag stickers, pins. (in zoom names)	individuals