

Juliet Takes a Breath

History, Herstory, Theirstory

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Description: This is an activity that I have done with my teen LGBTQIA+ group, Alphabet Soup, for one of our meetings. The program could be a stand-alone but the best audience will be an LGBTQIA group. This ties into the feminist research Juliet conducts for her summer internship.

Materials: Laptops, zine-creation crafts (paper, flipbooks, colored pencils, glue, magazines, etc.)

Queer History books and electronic resources: Queer, There, and Everywhere; A Queer History of the United States for Young People; Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World; Modern Herstory; We Are Everywhere; Gay America; LGBTQIA+ Athletes Claim the Field.; Wikipedia's List of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual People; Wikipedia's History of Transgender People; gltq.com via Wayback Machine; EBSCO's LGBT Life with Full Text.

Estimated Cost: None, supplies on-hand.

Prep Time: 30 Minutes to gather resources; **Program Time:** However long you want!

Instructions:

Begin by asking your teens if they know of any (dead) historical LGBTQIA+ figures. Lead a conversation about the struggles and successes for determining what historical figures were queer, and that historically there have always been LGBTQIA+ people (this isn't a new revelation.)

Provide teens access to a laptop and/or physical books that detail LGBTQIA+ historical figures. The one qualification is that they have to be dead and that it's a figure they are not familiar with or didn't know was queer (otherwise they will all choose Freddie Mercury.) Set a timer for them to conduct their research, a length of your choosing, but 45 minutes - hour may be best. Once time is up, ask them to lead a conversation about what they discovered. How do we know they're queer? Did they play a role in LGBTQIA+ rights? How did they live their lives? Did they have queer friends and a support group? What are some badass things that they did with their lives?

If you have enough time, or if this is a recurring meeting, ask them to create a zine about all the cool, queer people they read up on. Decorate with illustrations and print-outs of their figures, write blurbs about their lives and accomplishments, create poems and illustrations inspired by their research.

Learning Objective:

The objective of the program is for teens to learn about the LGBTQIA+ people who came before them, for teens to discover that there have been queer figures for centuries and that they are not alone. There are not enough collective biographies on LGBTQIA+ historical figures and their zine will be their contribution to this need for future teens. They also develop research skills and information literacy of reliable information resources.



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