Checklist: Things to Accomplish When Starting a Mentorship Program

### Note: These are just general suggestions for what to do – your process might be completely different depending on your school and your situation, so keep in mind that none of these steps are necessary!

# **1. Figure out who might be interested in your community**

* Determine student interest at your school – is there already an established LGBTQ+ community? Would any students be willing to mentor or be mentored?
  + If you’re comfortable with it, post about the idea on your personal Facebook or Twitter – ask people to message you privately if they’re interested
  + Ask a staff member at your school (a teacher, professor, counselor, etc.) for help spreading the word
  + Contact your school’s LGBTQ+ club(s) (like a GSA) if you have one and ask if any of the members would be interested
* Reach out to staff members at other schools in the area to see if they have students who would be interested in the program (see **sample emails**)
  + If someone at your own school can introduce you to a staff member (or if you know some students at the other schools), start by emailing that person and ask if they know anyone at the school who might be able to help you find students
  + If you don’t know anyone at these schools, try looking online to see if you can get the contact information of a guidance counselor or even the advisor of a GSA
* Reach out to community organizations in the area that may work with LGBTQ+ young people to see if there are any students who aren’t part of an official program who may be interested in participating (see **sample emails**)
* Hang flyers (with permission!) at the schools: your high school/college or the high schools/colleges in your area (see **sample flyer**)
* **IMPORTANT:** Once you have a contact at these schools and organizations, ask them if there are crisis counselors that you can tell the mentors to refer students to if anyone is struggling with something serious (for example, suicide) – be sure to fill out the **Crisis Referral Resource Guide** form and give it to the mentors!

# **2. See if you can attend upcoming LGBTQ+ events in your area**

*For example: many states host a GLSEN Prom for LGBTQ+ high school students*

* Reach out to the organizers at these events and see if you can sit at a table to get students’ contact information and answer their questions (see **sample email**)
* If you can’t do this, ask the organizers if they can hang flyers at the event for you – be sure to briefly explain the program and include your contact information! (see **sample flyers)**

# **3. If possible, find a staff support person at your school**

* If there’s a faculty or staff member (like a teacher) at your school who you think would be helpful to your program, get in contact with that person and ask for their advice about what specific steps you should take at your school
* This step isn’t necessary, but it might be a good idea to have some guidance as you go through the program – especially if you’re planning to make it into an official club at your school!

# **4. Communicate plans to participating students**

* Arrange to meet students at the other schools first – you’ll need more time to plan these meetings than simply sitting down with students at your own school, because it takes time to figure out when everyone is available and you can get transportation
  + Be sure to communicate a lot with your contact at the other school – ask them when the best times to meet would be, and how many students you can expect to be there
  + You can also meet via Skype or Google Hangouts (or other video chat options) if transportation is an issue
  + It may also be helpful to distribute a questionnaire to the interested students at these other schools to see what they would specifically be interested in (see **sample questionnaire**)
* Meet with the students at your school who are interested and work together to figure out your program’s logistics – it’s also probably a good idea to create a private Facebook group (or something similar) to communicate with them more easily! Some things you might want to figure out as a group:
  + How often will you meet?
  + Will you be traveling to other schools, or meeting with the other students by video chat (for example, via Skype or Google Hangouts)
  + Do you want to plan any events, or just hang out with the other students?
* If you’re working with a student who is the only one from their high school interested in the program, consider contacting them individually instead of traveling to the school itself. Be sure to communicate a lot with the student to let them know what’s going on! Give out your email (and/or phone number, if you’re comfortable with that) and encourage them to reach out any time to ask questions

# **5. Plan meeting(s) for the groups of students from different schools to get together**

* Now that you have students from your own school and other schools in the area interested in your program, bring them all together! You could do anything: host a fun event or just hang out and talk as a big group – it’s completely up to you.
* If transportation is an issue, consider holding this meeting online – it might be chaotic, but you could all video chat if that’s easier than finding a way to meet each other in person

# **6. Exchange contact information between groups of students**

* This will be helpful for staying in contact over summer vacation or other times when it’s difficult for everyone to meet as a big group!

# **7. Collaborate with each group of students to figure out your plan going forward**

* How often do you all want to meet? Would it be easier to meet in person once a month, and then via video chat every few weeks?
* Are other options for transportation available to you (for example, some groups may want to rely on their own cars, and at some colleges there are cars and vans that can be rented out by students whenever they need one)
* What kind of things do you want to do during meetings? Hang out and talk, play games, plan events, etc.?
* Who will be taking over the program next year?