



**Queer Peace International:**

**Curriculum Guide for Conference Seminars, Workshops and  
Study Sessions**

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### **Rationale**

As QPI grows, we might all be invited to speak about it on several occasions and in several contexts. I have designed these modules to help facilitate the Queer Peace process in hopes of achieving a greater understanding of what it is and how to engage audiences. Please note that these modules are continually a works-in-progress, so if you feel something should be changed, or have a better idea, feel free to deviate from this and try it out! Let me know what your suggestions are and so we can adjust as need be.

### **Disclaimer**

You are welcome to use this material free of charge. However, I only ask that at the beginning of every presentation/workshop that you reference me as the creator of Queer Peace International and the Queer Peace ideology, as well as provide the yahoo group address/website so that people can join if they would like to. As well, any printouts or presentations must include the QPI logo. This helps build my own and QPI's profile, and I can respond to inquiries/questions arising from your presentation.

Thanks for your understanding.

## **CONFERENCE SEMINAR (30 minutes)**

You managed to become accepted to present on Queer Peace at a conference, but are only given 30 minutes to present it. What can you do?

1. Deliver the power-point presentation on the four stages of Queer Peace plus the small information on Queer Theory and Queer Peace International. Site some examples from your personal work (people love stories) and add some humour into your presentation. For a copy of this presentation, please email Rob at [queerpeace@robertmizzi.com](mailto:queerpeace@robertmizzi.com).
2. Throw some questions on a few large pieces of paper such as
  - What is peace?
  - How do we achieve peace?
  - What does it mean to be 'Queer'?
  - What does the words 'Queer Peace' mean to you?

Invite participants to write out their answers on the paper. Give lots of space for people to write! Use the last question (about Queer Peace) for last and review the responses. In what areas do some of the responses fall under "Peace Making? Peace Keeping? Peace Building? Peace Reflecting?" and brainstorm some practical ways of achieving this.

Conclude with a narrative of a person who is Queer in the community you are presenting on...highlighting his/her struggle, but what s/he is doing to achieve peace now. Ask the participants to think of one (1) thing they are going to do to create a small amount of change (volunteer 3 hours on giving a seminar on something, write a letter inviting another minority representative to a Queer meeting, etc.)

3. Engage in some Popular Theatre techniques from Augusto Boal. You might need training on this before you facilitate this. Perhaps someone in your community can help out.
4. Share stories on what peace-building initiatives have taken place in home communities. This is excellent for international conferences. Ensure that participants don't fall into their coming out stories, however, but more capturing what they have learned and recommendations they can make on creating peace in a safe and nurturing environment.
5. Don't forget to allow time for questions/comments!

## CONFERENCE WORKSHOP (3 hours)

1. Begin with introducing yourself, and QPI (10 min)
2. Lead an introductory/warm-up game. (15 min) Here are some samples:

<p>Throw some questions on a few large pieces of paper such as</p> <p><i>What is peace?</i> <i>How do we achieve peace?</i> <i>What does it mean to be 'Queer'?</i> <i>What does the words 'Queer Peace' mean to you?</i></p> <p>Invite participants to write out their answers on the paper. Give lots of space for people to write! Make sure to debrief this experience.</p>	<p>Do a creative visualization of achieving peace and serenity. Ensure to have the participant reflect on their life path and choices. Make sure to debrief this experience.</p>	<p>Draw a large tree on a piece of paper and have participants draw themselves on the tree. The way they draw themselves and where they locate themselves on the tree illustrates where they are at for achieving peace within themselves. The top of the tree means absolute peace and reconciliation, whereas the bottom means still working through issues that relate to peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. Make sure to debrief this experience.</p>
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3. Deliver the 4-dimension Queer Peace Model. You could use the PowerPoint projector on this. Be sure to include personal stories and contextualize/frame the presentation in the culture you are presenting to. This makes it more real/attainable for the audience. (20 mins)
4. Hand out a piece of paper with 4 number lines on the page to each participant. Ask each to reflect and mark down where they are in the peace process. In a separate column, invite participants to write down their challenges and their successes. Invite participants to share, but make sure they know that they don't need to. This is an individual exercise. (20 mins)
5. Move onto the more interactive phase of the workshop. Introduce 'frozen pictures' as a dramatic technique to encourage self-expression. (Frozen pictures are when participants form themselves into a statue to express an emotion, rather than using their voice.) Since most people are unfamiliar with drama, I recommend starting this off as a group exercise.

Form participants into small groups of 3-4. Give each group a different scenario. Each scenario should depict a real life situation that could occur in that host culture/country. The scenarios can be a Queer person angry at another Queer and

“outs” them at work, or another could be a Queer-identifying picture is discovered a computer, thus outing the Queer person in a potentially dangerous situation. Try to choose/invent scenarios that have some kind of tension in them.

Afterwards, invite each group to present their frozen pictures. Debrief with each group why they made their decisions and what do some of the different facial expressions/levels/actions mean?

The concluding step involves the group solving the problem in a peaceful and non-violent way, again through a frozen picture. Give some examples so that people can brainstorm with a frame of reference of what they could do. Have the groups present their thoughts. Try to encourage realistic responses, rather than unrealistic ones (i.e. just leave the country). Debrief with the participants – was it a realistic response? What are some other ways to solve the problem? Try to tie in some personal experiences. (45 minutes)

6. Give a break in this session for 15 minutes.
7. Conclusion (15 minutes). Ask group members to review what they learned about the session. Invite them to join QPI as it grows and if they want to volunteer. Conclude with a narrative of a person who is Queer in the community you are presenting on...highlighting his/her struggle, but what s/he is doing to achieve peace now. Ask the participants to think of one (1) thing they are going to do to create a small amount of change (volunteer 3 hours on giving a seminar on something, write a letter inviting another minority representative to a Queer meeting, etc.)
8. Question/Comment Period (20 minutes)

## **STUDY SESSION (5 sessions)**

This is meant for an in-depth course that will last 5 weeks long, at 2 hour sessions each. It dives more critically into peace education and being and becoming Queer. Feel free to use this material if you establish a Queer Peace Club in your community, or just want to facilitate the sessions. Please email any feedback that you may have from this.

Session One – The Introduction

Session Two – Peace- Keeping Queerness

Session Three – Peace-Making Queerness

Session Four – Peace-Building Queerness

Session Five – Peace-Reflecting Queerness & Conclusion

## Session One- Introduction

1. Give a brief background of Queer Peace International, Queer Peace and your own journey. This helps familiarize the participants with why you have chosen to facilitate the workshop and your own personal/professional connections. Do a name game or have the participants introduce themselves. (10mins)
2. Set up a “guidelines” brainstorm. This means that there needs to be some rules to follow (i.e. no smoking indoors; always respect each other). Two key rules to make sure are in the list are ‘Speak from I statements’ and ‘Speak from experiences and not from generalizations.’ Please make sure that participants stick to these two rules, as they can be easily missed. (5 mins)
3. Throw some questions on a few large pieces of paper such as
  - What is peace?
  - How do we achieve peace?
  - What does it mean to be ‘Queer’?
  - What does the words ‘Queer Peace’ mean to you?

Invite participants to write out their answers on the paper. Give lots of space for people to write! Use the last question (about Queer Peace) for last and review the responses. In what areas do some of the responses fall under “Peace Making?” Peace Keeping? Peace Building? Peace Reflecting?” and brainstorm some practical ways of achieving this. Explain that more of these will be explored during the workshop. (20 mins)

4. Do a creative visualization of achieving peace and serenity. Ensure to have the participant reflect on their life path and choices. Make sure to debrief this experience. (20 mins)
5. Children’s Book Activity. Talking about Queer Peace can be a difficult and simple task. Sometimes it is better understood as if we were writing a children’s book to children about the concept. In small groups, you will have the chance to work on this project throughout the five weeks. Essentially, you will write a children’s book on how to talk about Queers needing, desiring, and achieving peace in their communities. Divide the participants into groups of four and have them begin planning the outline for it. At the end of course, if so desired, the books can be put on the QPI website.
6. Offer a question/answer/comment period. (5 mins)
7. Conclude the workshop with a quote or a poem on peace. (5 mins)
8. Give some time to participants to write in a journal. (10 mins)

## **Session Two – Peace Keeping**

1. Welcome everyone and have an opening game.
2. Introduce the topic of Peace Keeping. When people hear that word, what comes to mind?
3. Peace Keeping (1.20 hour)
  - a. In my research project, Queers identified some real key areas to keeping safe in their difficult surroundings. These skills included:
    - ii. Choosing when, who, how and why to “come out”
    - iii. Keeping invisible and changing behaviour and/or mannerisms
    - iv. Applying other social privileges (class, race, gender, ability)
    - v. “Gay Drain” to other countries/regions/communities
  - b. Go through each one and see if this rings true to the participants. What other mechanisms did they use to stay safe if they felt threatened? (This could transcend into other minority groups as well.)
  - c. What is something they would do differently? What worked or what didn't work? Is “coming out”, despite its power and strength, the preferred way of confronting violence? Is there anything wrong with “staying invisible?”
  - d. Have the participants sit in pairs and tell each other a story where s/he felt threatened or very cautious. Make sure the listener is paying attention to any themes that were spoken of. Repeat the exercise except with the partner telling a story
  - e. The pairs then choose which story they would like to share with another pair. Once the four have shared both stories. One story is chosen for a dramatic presentation. The key is not to act out the story/experience, but to have shared frozen picture that has the participants move slowly into a frozen statue depicting the scenario.
  - f. Audience members then (one by one) step freely forward to move the body positions so that it is a safer scene for the key participant. There is no right/wrong answer or solution. All ideas are welcome.
5. Debrief the experience with the participants. (15 mins)
6. Offer a question/answer period. (5 mins)
7. Conclude the workshop with a quote or a poem on peace. (5 mins)
8. Give some time to participants to write in a journal.
9. Give some time to participants to work on their children's book.

### Session Three: Peace-Making

1. Welcome everyone and have an opening game. (10 mins)
2. Check in with the children's books and if there are any materials that are needed. (5 mins)
3. Introduce "Peace Making" (15 mins)  
Peace Making attempts to provide Queers with the skills to manage their own conflicts nonviolently.
  - i. Workshops and study circles
  - ii. Support Groups and counseling
  - iii. Queer Socialization and Camaraderie
  - iv. Build connections to other marginalized individuals
4. Go through each one and see if this rings true to the participants. What other mechanisms did they use to make peace with their surroundings and begin the peace-making process? (This could transcend into other minority groups as well.)
5. Painting a picture. Queers need to learn about their identity and culture as they engage this process. In what ways is this possible? In small groups, and through given pastel colours, provide each group with an opportunity to paint a large piece of paper of what Queers can do during this time. Refrain from peace-building (ref: going out and starting a new club) but moreso what they can do to improve themselves and their learning. (40 mins)
6. Once finished, post the paintings and have a walk around like an art gallery. Post some paper on the sides of each painting for people to freely write questions/comments. Debrief anything that comes up. (20 mins)
7. Draw a large tree on a piece of paper and have participants draw themselves on the tree. The way they draw themselves and where they locate themselves on the tree illustrates where they are at for achieving peace within themselves. The top of the tree means absolute peace and reconciliation, whereas the bottom means still working through issues that relate to peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. Make sure to debrief this experience. (15 mins)
8. Debrief the experience with the participants. (15 mins)
10. Offer a question/answer period. (5 mins)
11. Conclude the workshop with a quote or a poem on peace. (5 mins)
12. Give some time to participants to write in a journal.
13. Give some time to participants to work on their children's book.

## Session Four: Peace-Building

1. Welcome everyone and have an opening game (10 mins)
2. Check in with the children's book and if there are any materials that are needed. (5 mins).

3. Introduce "Peace Building" (15 mins)

Peace Building is a holistic approach and teaches strategies on several different levels: content, skills, feelings, pedagogy, discipline, motivation and administration.

- i. Organizing non-violent marches and protests
- ii. Teaching anti-homophobia education in schools
- iii. Working in solidarity with other Queers and other disenfranchised groups

Peace Building is a more proactive approach which teaches Queers to desire and to achieve peace. It tries to motivate Queer citizens to pursue standards of social justice and to want to construct a better world based on the preservation of human rights and ecological sustainability.

4. Go through each one and see if this rings true to the participants. What other mechanisms did they use to make peace with their surroundings and begin the peace-building process? (This could transcend into other minority groups as well.)
5. Pink Maps. In this activity, you will do some research about your town/city. What are some the positive and negative spaces for being Queer? Work on a list between the two. This idea is related to the Green Maps, which highlight the positive and negatives of the environment in cities/towns. Some samples could be:

Positive	Negative
Gay discussion group meeting every Tuesday night	City Hall does not provide same-sex benefits
Library holds GLBT-friendly books	John Street is famous for anti-gay attacks and slurs

6. Take a map of the city and town and draw in each of the positive and negative aspects of being queer that you identified in your Positive/Negative sheet. Remember to think that being Queer not only refers to the majority, but to the minorities as well. So if you are disabled and lesbian, does the disabled community welcome Queer people? You can work as a large team, or in small groups. Afterwards, present and talk about your Pink Map to each other. You might want to keep this Pink Map to post on your wall at your office or community centre. (1 1/2 hours)
7. Continue to work on the Children's books to complete for next session.
8. Debrief the experience with the participants. (15 mins)

9. Offer a question/answer period. (5 mins)
10. Conclude the workshop with a quote or a poem on peace. (5 mins)
11. Give some time to participants to write in a journal.

## **Session Five: Peace-Reflecting**

1. Welcome everyone and have an opening game (10 mins)
2. Introduce “Peace Reflecting” (15 mins)  
Peace reflecting enables the Queer person to reflect on his/her development to ensure a personal peace is being met. “Coming out” is a continual process, and can be daunting at times.
  - i. Personal forms of expression (art, writing, etc.)
  - ii. Reflective Learning
  - iii. Sharing experiences and learning
  - iv. Ongoing cycle of ‘re-searching’

Ask the questions: What do you do to find your inner peace? How do you reflect? Why is this essential in Queer Peace development?

3. Hand out the reading located in the appendix on differing perspectives of peace. Have the participants underline or highlight ideas that they connect to. Debrief the text through having the participants offer reasons why certain parts of the text was impactful. (15 mins)
4. Reflective Writing. Everyone chooses someone to write a letter to describe what they have learned since coming out, and how they have used this new knowledge. It can be to any person, dead or alive. Everyone begins writing their letter. After a couple of minutes, the letters are changed between members (either in small groups, or in the large group). The letters are continued, as if they never stopped. The rotations continue until the page is completed. The letters are read. The objective of this exercise is to show how similar experiences can be, but also how we take different bits of learning from them. What I learn from an experience, might be different from my neighbour have a similar experience, which is why we need to communicate and work together in order to share the learning. Knowledge, as the article we read describes, is a part of finding personal peace. We must also continue gathering, sharing, and learning in order to find Queer Peace (30 mins)
5. Sharing the Children’s Books. Repeat the objective of the exercise.  
  
Talking about Queer Peace can be a difficult and simple task. Sometimes it is better understood as if we were writing a children’s book to children about the concept. In small groups, you will have the chance to work on this project throughout the five weeks. Essentially, you will write a children’s book on how to talk about Queers needing, desiring, and achieving peace in their communities. Divide the participants into groups of four and have them begin planning the outline for it. At the end of course, if so desired, the books can be put on the QPI website.
6. Everyone shares their children’s books. Debrief a conversation about them. Its important for the facilitator to be very encouraging and positive about these

accomplishments, as the facilitator's objective should be at this point to empower the participants to continue spreading Queer Peace, rather than being critical and disempowering them. (30 mins)

7. Begin debriefing the entire study sessions. Was it useful? Did a clearer understanding of QP emerge? Is it useful to talk about these peace-building elements –why? You might want to design an evaluation form to give to participants. Please encourage them to become QPI members and become involved in QPI. All help is needed and welcomed!
8. Conclude the workshop with a quote or a poem on peace. (5 mins)
9. Give some time to participants to write in a journal.
10. Big hugs goodbye!

## *APPENDIX 1.1*

- \* Peace is not merely the absence of war and hatred (negative peace) but also the presence of cooperation, compassion and worldwide justice (positive peace).
- \* What is war? It is a state of hostility between nations (or within nations) characterized by fighting and bloodshed. Wars are often caused by real/perceived injustice, hatred, poverty, and the desire for power.
- \* What is perhaps the best way to prevent war? Conflict prevention and Conflict resolution/transformation requires that we eliminate the nature of the hostilities and attempt to create harmony and equality between the various parties. Restorative justice implies that the perceived injustices must be resolved through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, community conferencing, community meditation, negotiated rulemaking, collaborative/international law, or as a last resort, military action. Trauma recovery / Identity renewal can help prevent war torn areas from falling back into further fighting. Youth development strategies can help our future adults from repeating the mistakes we have made that have lead us to war. Philosophy suggests that nations that have found peace should help less peaceful nations by sharing knowledge, food and other resources. Our conscience teaches us that we should treat others the way we want to be treated, with dignity and respect.
- \* How can we achieve Peace on Earth? First and utmost, we must find it within ourselves. By sharing our inner peace with others, peace will spread. By raising our children properly and teaching them to respect and love their neighbors (didn't someone say this before? :) they will learn the joy of peace. The peace process should be a predominantly preventative measure (A gram of prevention is worth a kilogram of cure). Peace should likely start as a grassroots movement, thereby creating a "trickle-up" process. Not only can we teach others about peace but we can put pressure on governments and political candidates that continue to advocate war as the main solution to civil and international conflict. Along the way, some form of world "Planning and Lawmaking" committee probably needs to be established that includes all nations. One nation's problems are problems for all of us. We must learn to see ourselves as one small planet and not be so concerned with our nationality, race or religion. When it comes right down to it we are all human. Think what we could accomplish if we all worked together to create a true world economy. We could end starvation, reduce poverty, create jobs and work towards common goals such as worldwide justice, peace education, pollution control and planet management.
- \* Conflict Identification and Prevention: Conflict risk assessments are based on a number of variables. A history of armed conflict is an indicator of a problem. In political cultures of conflict the risk is higher that parties will continue resorting to violence. You can look at governance and political instability; the lack of an accountable political institution through which to channel grievances can aggravate the risk of violent outbursts. Transitional states are at higher risk of violent change, until they become fully consolidated democracies. You can look at the denial of civil and political liberties, the level of democracy, and restriction on civil and political rights. All of those will eventually

lead to violent expression if there are no peaceful alternatives for resolving disputes. The history and degree of militarization in a country or population heterogeneity identify tensions which may be greater in ethnically or religiously heterogeneous populations. The distribution of resources along ethnic or identity lines, demographic stresses, and so on, are often precursors of violence. Other indicators include economic decline, numerous unemployed young men with no opportunities for the future, high debt burdens, low involvement in international trade. All these factors are associated with a higher risk of state failure. You look at the human development indicators. The countries in the bottom half of the human development index are much more likely to experience violent conflict. Now that's a chicken and the egg problem. Are they in the lowest development indicator positions because they have been prone to violent conflict or are they in conflict because they are extremely poor and have no other options to resolve their issues? It's hard to build democracy on an empty stomach. Also examine environmental stress. The degradation and depletion of resources can generate tensions in communities. You look at international linkages: Are there other countries that make incursions across the border? Many indicators are factored in to determine whether a country is at high risk.

We must learn to accept the fact that others will not always respond to our needs and wants in the way that we want them to. Instead of getting upset with them we need to learn to bless them and wish them well, which is exactly what we hope for ourselves. What we show outside is merely a reflection of what we are inside. Negative thoughts promote negative outcomes. Positive, loving thoughts promote positive outcomes! Think of it as an energy force that powers our well-being. Positive thoughts promote positive well-being! So simple it almost eludes us.

We need to learn from our mistakes. Instead of degrading ourselves we must realize that failure and success go hand in hand. Failure is necessary because it provides obvious lessons to learn from. Analysis of these lessons should improve the chances for future prosperity.

Remember that some of the most hollow periods of our lives can happen right after we reach important goals if we haven't already established higher ones. Maybe some of the goals you set should focus on personal enlightenment? Success, like material possessions, only makes one happy for a while. We need to have continuous successes and set-backs for life to stay stimulating. There is a law of diminishing returns that states that the more you attain of something the less you enjoy the excessive amounts. We all have needs and wants but let's not get carried away. If you have too much, be it time, money or love, start sharing it with others that can benefit. If you think that seeing a smile or a tear on a thankful face isn't one of the best rewards in life then you haven't truly experienced this feeling recently.

Values are important because without positive moral values, others may resent your actions and may not radiate positive energy in your direction. Remember that when you try to point to something that makes you happy there are three or more fingers pointing back at you. We all need a minimum level of material possessions but without the personal wealth that comes from within, external wealth is nearly meaningless.

We need songs about World Peace. Listening to music is a right-brain activity and we need both the left and right sides of our brain to be thinking about peace in order to integrate it into our soul. Music artists can improve our lives through the energy they put into their music.

We need films about World Peace. For our visual senses, we need to see less violence and more themes that promote heroes over injustice and mediocrity. We need films that reward strong moral values and have messages that show us ways of achieving peace and success in life.

Corporations must join the effort and create work environments that address today's changing workforce. With the advent of the internet and home computers, some jobs could be performed at home allowing for flexible work hours, reduced traffic, improved working conditions and improved productivity. Companies can also start their own non-profit peace organizations that focus on issues in their communities and staff the organization with employee volunteers.

We need a World Flag we can proudly wave that will signify that we are growing up as a united world of peace-loving souls. This flag ought to be designed by the children of the world since they are the ones that will benefit most from peace conditioning. We have the futuristic vision of one race (human), on one planet (earth), with two main purposes, Peace and Enlightenment.

- Unknown