

Tuesday Talk “How-to” UC Riverside

Updated September 2010.

Questions regarding this document may be directed to:

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→ Thank you to Jami Grosser and Toi Thibodeaux for expanding and improving Tuesday Talks.

Purpose & Benefits:

Tuesday Talks bring together students for peer support on a consistent day of the week and time. We rotate audiences, bringing together students around particular identities or experiences. [See descriptions below.]

Often, Tuesday Talks are the first times new students walk into the LGBT Resource Center space, because 1) they have a “reason” to be in the center without having to know anyone; 2) we close down the center except for the group and maintain a confidential environment.

The facilitator is a staff or faculty person who shares the identity of the Tuesday Talk focus, if it is identity-based (e.g. Grrrl Talk, Guy Talk, Queer People of Color), which also allows some role modeling.

Tuesday Talks also fill a gap when students do not yet have a critical mass or the ability to start a student organization. We launched the Tuesday Talk QPOC group, for example, a few years before the student organization was established. We have both now, with the QPOC of UCR student organization recommending the Tuesday Talk QPOC group as a great way for their members to find additional safe space.

Challenges:

Because some programs such as Women’s Studies and the Honors Program require students to attend campus events and write reports, we found students trying to show up and take notes. This was distracting and sometimes threatening to students trying to find community and support. We started adding this note to marketing: “This meeting is not open to students attending events for class credit.” The facilitator asks students to leave the group, too, if she sees folks taking notes or otherwise stating they are there for a requirement. Students are invited to take advantage of other LGBTRC events, instead.

All groups are open to all identities, so men can attend Grrrl Talk and white people can attend QPOC. Sometimes people stay to provide moral support (e.g. a straight ally helping a friend who is “coming out” and wants a friend with her in the LGBTRC space). However, facilitators make clear the purpose of the Tuesday Talk, and usually students will willingly leave if they do

not identify with the group's experiences. If someone stays and is clearly disrupting the conversation by asking others from a place of privilege to educate them, then the facilitator will explain the Tuesday Talk purpose and tell them to take advantage of other educational opportunities.

Sometimes participants try to use the Tuesday Talks as group therapy. The facilitator directs conversation to other topics and other people. The facilitator makes sure to provide additional resources, such as the Counseling Center, 1-on-1 with the student needing deeper help.

Sometimes people who are not UCR students show up. We usually allow them to stay if they are college-age and clearly following our ground rules. We occasionally have older community members show up, and then we explain the group is for UCR students to avoid awkwardness with generation gaps or issues too far afield for the usual discussions. (For example, many years ago a mentally ill, older homeless woman tried to attend Grrrl Talk to find support or a date.)

We think it is really important for facilitators to be role models for identity-based groups. When we do not have staff who share an identity (e.g. no men, no people of color), then we seek out other staff and faculty willing to help us out. Occasionally, we ask a graduate student with facilitation skills to help out. We are conscious of the burden often placed on some staff and faculty to always "be there," even though it is not part of their paid job. This especially affects queer people of color. So, we do our best to not always take advantage of their generosity and to show our appreciation. Finally, this is one more reason to seek out a diverse professional staff when recruiting.

History at UCR: Tuesday Talks have met for over 15 years on Tuesdays from 5pm to 6pm. The first group was QuAD, the Queer Asian Discussion group, begun in 1993. Grrrl Talk followed in 1997, and we expanded offerings in 2000. They were known as Rap Groups until 2010, when we changed the name because so many students thought we were "rapping" music, rather than talking.

Descriptions of Tuesday Talk Groups

4 core groups that rotate twice a quarter.

Fluidity

This supportive discussion group is for students and their allies to talk about the genderqueer, bisexual, transgender, pansexual, queer and questioning communities, or the need for any labels around sexual orientation or gender identity.

Grrrl Talk

Lesbian, bisexual, queer, and questioning women and their allies are invited to join a supportive discussion group.

Guy Talk

Gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning men and their allies are invited to join a supportive discussion group.

Queer People of Color (QPOC)

This supportive discussion group is recommended for self-identified people of color to explore multiple identities and the intersections of race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Traditionally, the first group of the Fall quarter is “Coming Out Stories.” It is also the only one at which we offer free pizza; and we leave the center closed until everyone has a chance to speak, instead of ending the group and opening the doors at 6pm.

Coming Out Stories

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and their allies are invited to join a supportive discussion on "coming out." Share your story, listen to others'. Help us celebrate National Coming Out Day (Oct. 11)!

Other groups offered:

Let's Talk About Sex!

Students of all sexual orientations and gender identities are welcome to join us for a frank discussion about sex and sexuality.

Faith Talk

This supportive discussion group is for LGBT, queer, and questioning students to explore their experiences with faith, spirituality, and organized religion.

Please respect this meeting as a safe space for members of the LGBTQ community. People wishing to be educated regarding spirituality and sexuality are encouraged to attend the Allies Brown Bag on this topic.

Family Talk

This supportive discussion group is for LGBT people and their allies to share experiences around family and coming out, acceptance, and building better relationships.

Set-up – notes for our guest facilitators:

Note: Additional chairs may be rolled into the Lounge from the CyberCenter or Meeting Rm.

- Sometimes students in the center aren't aware that there is a Tuesday Talk group starting at 5pm. I usually make an announcement a few minutes before so folks can leave or decide to stay and join the group. Really anybody can participate, even if they don't identify with the topic for that night (e.g. men are allowed at Grrrl Talk), they just need to participate. Students cannot stay on the CyberCenter or Meeting Room during the Tuesday Talk. If they are going to be in the center from 5pm to 6pm, they need to be participating.
- Hang the Tuesday Talks Group sign on the outside of the center door. Tape is on Mark's desk.
- You will want to make sure that the door is **unlocked** when you shut it or folks won't be able to get in. The way you do that is on the edge where the metal part connects to the outer frame. There are two circle buttons. One will be pushed in (that locks it). Push the other one in to unlock it.

Discussion

There really is no exact rule for how the discussion should go. I've listed the ground rules I usually set, etc. Feel free to add/modify, whatever you feel comfortable with. If you have new faces, you may need to spend a minute or so talking about what exactly the Tuesday Talk group is about. It's an opportunity for folks to have whatever kind of conversations they want. However, the Tuesday Talks are **not** therapy groups. While students can talk about their personal experiences, the group doesn't exist for folks to work through deep issues.

- Introduce yourself. I always have everyone introduce themselves (name, year, major, it's up to you).
- Ground rules.
 - Confidential environment. Please keep specifics of what folks share confidential. Doesn't mean that you can't talk about the topics discussed, just not the names and specifics of those present.
 - It's OK to pass. Though we encourage you to contribute to the conversation whenever you feel comfortable.
 - Be respectful of others. Don't interrupt if someone has the floor.
 - Be aware if you are speaking a lot. Give others a chance to contribute.
- I always start out by seeing if folks have a topic they would like to discuss or something on their mind. Students don't always have ideas, so be prepared with a topic or two. We can discuss that too, if you can't think of anything.
- If you wish, you can pass around blank cards and a bowl for students to write down topic ideas anonymously. This also helps generate topics for future meetings.
- I always make sure that we stop at 6:00pm. Folks can continue to have discussions, but we always open the center back up to anyone at that time.
- You'll want to make sure that you **lock the door** again. Prop the door open, but push the other button in. It's OK if students continue to hang out until the center closes.

Follow-up

Remember how many students show up (for my records) and just let me know afterward what some of the topics were. I don't need to know specifics, just the overall topics. Let me know if you have additional questions. Thank you so very much for helping out with this! I know that you will be great.