Our Values & Priorities

To be part of Gaylore events in any capacity, whether it be a volunteer, presenter, or attendee (virtually or in-person), we ask that all folks share & commit to core the values of our community and team of volunteers. Think of these values as touchstones to guide us as we make decisions that ultimately affect each other. Our community care research proves that having a healthy sense of values individually fosters healthy interpersonal relationships; Which, in turn, aids in our goal of building a welcoming, healing, safe community space. This document is always evolving and changing, and we invite folks to contact us if they feel their values aren't represented here.

Center the experience of marginalized identities

This space is first and foremost for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual community. Within the LGBTQIA+ community there are infinite intersections of identity that factor into folks' life experiences, needs, privilege, and perspectives. We recognize our responsibility to de-center white supremacism as a Queer space; Which means we uplift, prioritize and center those most marginalized within our already marginalized community. This means celebrating the voices of Black members, Indigenous members, members of color, nonnative English speakers, disabled, chronically ill, and neurodivergent members. This is the job of *all* planners, volunteers, attendees, presenters, and members of the Gaylore community, to assure that every decision centers marginalized members of the community. This is not and should not be the labor of marginalized folks. This is an ongoing process that remains the focus of all event planning and community care.

Embrace the complexity of it all

To travel through the portal of Gaylore, we become historians, theorists, researchers, pop culture commentators, philosophers, detectives, deconstructors, creators, etc….. The way we engage with all forms of media is equally critical and magical. It is crucial that we embrace the multitudes of each of our interpretations, opinions, theories, ideas, and commentaries. It is important to avoid projecting or making assumptions about another person's identities (including Taylor and other Gaylors) based on their theories presented, labels, and/or appearance. If you find yourself disagreeing with another person's interpretation of something, approach their idea with genuine curiosity to seek understanding and learn from each other. Avoid falling into the trap of thinking your own theories are infallible, or somehow more "correct" than another person's. Also, try to deconstruct the idea of "ownership of ideas", which is rooted in the colonizer mentality. We're all working with the same texts and trying to make sense of it together.

Cultivate a culture of platonic community intimacy

As our goal is to build a healthy network of community, we want to emphasize and promote the importance of cultivating Queer platonic connections above all else. Folks in our space should feel comfortable to build connections without the expectation of relationship expansion beyond platonic. The bulk of work done in a healthy community is establishing proper boundaries and

discussing explicit relationship expectations; This just means that we expect folks to be responsible in building their friendships… and just as responsible if platonic intimacy does naturally progress into other forms of intimacy like sexual, romantic, familial, etc! Being in community means being honest about consent, boundaries, and overall expectations of all parties involved while cultivating relationships of ALL kinds.

Celebrate each other's boundaries + enthusiastic consent

Setting boundaries can be difficult, especially in online communities where we are rapidly making new friends and expanding our social circles. We want Gaylore to be a healthy, reciprocal network of connections, friends, mutuals, etc. This means actively practicing healthy relationship habits like setting + respecting boundaries, centering enthusiastic consent + honesty, and genuine sensitivity and care for those in your community (more in our community care toolkit!) Please keep in mind that many folks in this space have strong boundaries around anonymity for safety reasons. So, if a person has not explicitly said they are open to being photographed, messaged, tagged, credited, quoted, or otherwise contacted/identified, do not do so without their consent. In the case that you attempt to reach out to someone and they don't respond, celebrate your attempt to make a connection and respect their time, space, and social preferences by moving forward without resentment. No one should be forced to or expected to disclose anything about their identities or traumas as a requisite for participating in this space. Nor is anyone required or expected to be constantly communicative or social with folks. This is a safe place for people who are closeted, questioning, or not comfortable sharing their identities. This is a safe space for folks with varying levels of social capacity and ability. With that being said, there is no expectation that folks should be on camera or mic during virtual events, because we do not know what everyone's personal preferences are, their social ability or desire, their home, access to the Internet, etc.

Unpacking Parasocial Relationships

A parasocial relationship is a one-sided relationship formed when one party extends energy, interest, and time and the other person doesn't know they exist. This kind of asymmetrical relationship has been researched in America since the popularity of television in the 1950's, because the realism of moving photos led folks to extend A LOT more energy to their relationships with policial figures, performers, artists, etc. We can form parasocial relationships these days with folks we follow online (regardless of their follower count or popularity), musicians we're fans of, politicians, activists, the guy you see walk past your window everyday at the same time who you gave a name and storyline to… No matter the level of parasocial-ness, we ask everyone in our community to do the individual work of deconstructing, unpacking, and renegotiating parasocial relationships as we engage with artists, literature, pop culture, etc. This means thinking about what kind of projections we make as fans (or as haters) of artists, considering the asymmetrical/parasocial relationships we have with each other online, avoiding placing moral beliefs onto public figures, and allowing folks to be critical about your own parasocial-ness if it's brought up. Parasocial relationships can contribute to many individual mental health struggles, but research has proven that building concrete communities and support systems within parasocial spaces can actually aid in mental health! So let's aim for

building a community where we can lean on one another while navigating parasocial relationships and real relationships of all kinds. Unpacking our parasocial tendencies and projections will make it much easier to form interpersonal connections from our virtual connections with one another.

Honor your intuition

If at any point a member of the community makes you feel unsafe, reach out to a member of the planning team or any volunteer you trust. In a world where marginalized folks are constantly being told to ignore feelings of discomfort for the sake of avoiding conflict and maintaining the status quo, we must commit to trusting ourselves and each other. If you're unsure whether something is worth bringing up with a member of the planning team, we encourage you to bring it up anyway for the sake of honoring *your* experience.

Commit to restorative justice practices

Should harm be done, we are committed to moving through the conflict in a way that honors our values and the inherent worth of every member of our community. No member of this community will be blocked, exiled, or removed from the space without first being given the opportunity to express their perspective, make amends, and/or shift their behavior going forward. We follow a restorative justice model (in our community care toolkit) and encourage members of our community to familiarize themselves with it, as it's imperative to de-constructing white supremacist framework.

"Rules" have basis/emotional realities

While this is a long list of values we center as a planning team and hope to cultivate in our community spaces, we also recognize that there is nuance to being in community. None of the rules or values we set in our spaces, virtual or online, are written in stone. There is no such thing as a perfect community or space, no such thing as a perfect community member, a "good" or "bad" person… We hold ample space for the differing emotions, experiences, and realities of everyone entering our space. Our values and rules for spaces are meant to be changed, to evolve, and to fit the needs of folks within them.