

# Supporting Reproductive Justice Through SisterLove

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During my time at SisterLove, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the intersections of feminism and race and how important it is to center underrepresented voices in reproductive justice, whether that means women, the black community, the queer community, or young adults. I learned that all of these voices have vital ideas that could help expand the organization in new direction.

Being a part of SisterLove taught me that if I am welcomed into space, even if my positionally doesn't 100% align, my voice and ideas are valid. My main project revolved around the Healthy Love Parties which are informal and pleasure-based education spaces for small groups. During the course of the summer, I designed, organized, implemented, and facilitated three Healthy Love Listening Sessions. Within this conversation topics such as consent, comfort with protection, past sex education, understanding of HIV, and queering sex education were discussed. Our groups focused on three groups; youth, the LGBTQIA+ community, and Black women within Atlanta. The goal of the sessions was to center language justice and find what best fostered an inclusive environment and add that language to the facilitation guide for the Healthy Love Parties. On this project, I learned to be self-motivated and navigate an online space to find appropriate resources to accomplish my goals. Although it was a new and intimidating experience, I am grateful that I was able to host the Listening Sessions and watch my project grow from an idea to a real-life implementation. SisterLove also taught me the realities of working at an NGO and the patience and work that needs to go into every project to see real community impactful results.

One of the highlights during my internship period this summer was discussing new ways to 'queer' sex education. It has been apparent by the recent changes in *Roe v. Wade* that science and pleasure-based sex education is crucial for the health of the nation. Unfortunately, the levels of abstinence-only based education within the United States are very high, especially within the South. So it is imperative that young teens learn information about sex, consent, pregnancy, and possible risks that come with having unprotected sex so they can be better prepared for a world after *Roe*. My goal within the groups was to hone in on the topics and language that surrounds queer sex which then could be included in SisterLove's pedagogy. It was refreshing to hear everyone's perspectives on how to engage teens and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Overall I am extremely grateful for this experience through the Newcomb Institute because

I was able to begin to grasp what passion it takes to work for an NGO, especially within the Reproductive Justice field. It was energizing to see SisterLove's vision to eradicate HIV and serve those who have been affected. I hope to continue my relationship with SisterLove in the future and give guidance to those who are interested in the same path.