Creating Safe and Supportive Spaces for Gender Non-Conforming and LGBTQ+ Youth

Christy Hamilton, M.S.Ed, LCPC, Christy2@siu.edu
Pronouns: She, Her, Hers

Beth McCadden, Ph.D. Elizabeth.McCadden@siu.edu
Pronouns: She, Her, Hers

Counseling & Psychological Services
SIU Student Health Services
374 East Grand Avenue
Carbondale, IL 62901
Basket of Concerns and Hope

- Responses are Anonymous.

- Please answer the following questions.
  
  1. What if any concerns do I have working with LGBTQ+ individuals?
  2. What do I most hope I learn in today’s presentation?
American Psychological Association

• “Homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgement, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capabilities” (1975)

• “Same sex sexual and romantic attractions, feelings, and behaviors are normal and positive variations of human sexuality regardless of sexual orientation identity” (2009)

• APA’s call to mental health professionals → Remove stigma of mental illness that has been associated with homosexual orientations
Diversification
Copyright © 2015 Gay Alliance

• A personal lifelong process of developing respectful individuals who live together and / or work together in a healthy, vibrant community
  • Learn
  • Grow
  • Change
  • Teach
Learning Objectives

• Acquire gender affirming vocabulary
• Understand the challenges encountered by LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming youth in school, familial and medical settings
• Identify strategies to address these challenges for this population
• Become stronger and more informed allies
What does that mean?

• LGBTQ+

• Through the years.....GLBT, LGBT, LGB, LGBTQ, LGBTQ-GE

• Plus - other identities one can label themselves
  • Pansexual, Demisexual, Aromantic, Butch, MSM
  • Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Genderqueer, Femme
# The SIEO Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX Assigned at Birth</th>
<th>CURRENT Gender IDENTITY</th>
<th>Gender EXPRESSION</th>
<th>Sexual ORIENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex Assigned at Birth

• Medical Term: Male/Female/Intersex

• Labeling

• Example: Assigned Male at Birth, Assigned Female at Birth, Intersex

• Everyone has a biological sex.
Current Gender Identity

• One’s Inner Sense: Male/Female/Neither Both

• Examples: Cisgender, Transgender, (Man/ Woman) Trans Woman/Men, MTF, FTM, Trans

• People whose gender identity falls outside the gender binary (male or female) may refer to themselves as genderqueer, gender fluid, non-binary, or other terms.
Gender Expression

• Gender Performativity (masculine, feminine, androgynous, butch, femme, manly, lady-like, etc. (Adjectives.)

• The way in which a person expresses their gender identity, typically through their appearance, dress, and behavior.
Sexual Orientation

• How a person characterizes their sexual and emotional attraction to others.

• Behavior
  • Sexual Attraction
  • Romantic Attraction
  • Identity

• Examples: Gay, Straight, Lesbian, Bisexual

• Health Professionals cannot infer an individual’s sexual identity from their behavior, and vice versa.
The SIEO Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two Spirit</th>
<th>Trans*/Transgender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Lesbian</th>
<th>Drag Queen or King</th>
<th>Bisexual</th>
<th>Genderqueer</th>
<th>Pansexual</th>
<th>Intersex</th>
<th>Androgynous</th>
<th>Femme</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid</th>
<th>Say Instead</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
<th>Say Instead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hermaphrodite</td>
<td>Intersex</td>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>Gay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Female or Born Male</td>
<td>Assigned Female or Assigned Male</td>
<td>A “gay” or a “Transgender”</td>
<td>“A gay/transgender person”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Genders or Opposite Sex</td>
<td>All Genders</td>
<td>Ladies and Gentlemen</td>
<td>Everyone, Folks, Honored Guests, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It” when referring to someone if pronouns are unknown</td>
<td>“They, them, theirs”</td>
<td>Preferred Pronouns?</td>
<td>What are your pronouns?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your preferred name?</td>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td>Tranny</td>
<td>Transgender or Trans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Challenges Encountered by Gender Non-Conforming and LGBTQ+ Youth: Schools

- Middle School – greater risk for mental health issues
- Larger number of unexcused absences, drop-out rates
- Less sense of school belongingness
- Greater academic difficulties
- Fewer plans to attend college
- Victimization in schools → long-term negative effects

• What’s happening in the schools?
Challenges Encountered by Gender Non-Conforming and LGBTQ+ Youth: Schools

• Lack of training → lack of response

• Examples of passive behaviors:
  • Ignoring pleas for help
  • Appearing indifferent to threats
  • Not intervening after hearing harassment remarks

• Examples of active behaviors
  • Blaming the targeted student for the harassment
  • Mocking the student
  • Purposely using birth names rather than preferred names
  • Directing trans youth to act more like their assigned sex
Challenges Encountered by Gender Non-Conforming and LGBTQ+ Youth: Family

- Family support = predictor against depression
- Family Rejection = predictor of suicide attempts

www.transstudent.org/graphics
Challenges Encountered by Gender Non-Conforming and LGBTQ+ Youth: Family
Challenges Encountered by Gender Non-Conforming and LGBTQ+ Youth: Health Care

• Health Disparities
  • MDD, GAD, GBV, AOD, HIV, STI
  • Smoking, weight control

• Lack of providers
  • Medical school training is minimal.
  • Few specialists and little time for continuing education
  • Difficult to identify LGBTQ+ -friendly medical providers

• Discrimination and Prejudice
  • Make assumptions, don’t prepare patient for what can be intrusive procedures, don’t share in medical decision-making.
  • Overall lack of authentic comfort and issue of sameness.
  • Lack of adequate facilities (restrooms)

Strategies to incorporate into school-based health centers. Conforming and LGBTQ+ Youth: Health Care

• Creating an Inclusive Environment
  • Forms, signage, office practices, gender neutral bathrooms, staff bios

• LGBT Affirming Clinical Encounters
  • Specific education for LGBTQ+ health, ask questions with gender neutral language, use terms the patient uses, avoid use of pronouns when greeting, take open, non-judgmental sexual history

• Mistakes
  • Not possible to avoid all errors all the time. Say “I apologize for using the wrong pronoun/name/terms. I did not mean to disrespect you.”

• Take skillful sexual histories

• Include front line staff.

Strategies to incorporate into school-based settings

• Mentorship-
• Sponsor LGBTQ+ student organizations
• Connect youth to community resources
  • Ex: Rainbow Café in Carbondale, Ill.
• Advocate for transgender inclusion
• Stop LGBTQ+ motivated harassment
• Develop course curriculum reflective of understanding gender diversity
Strategies to incorporate into school-based settings

• Provide regular, on-going training to your staff on creating affirmative environments for LGBTQ+ / gender non-conforming youth

• Refer to students by the name and pronouns that align with their gender identity

• Develop a process that assures privacy and confidentiality of an individual’s transgender identity
Strategies for Parents Support in the Family

• Provide a safe place for a child’s own development rather than pushing them in one direction over another

• Talk and listen respectfully about her LGBTQ+ identity
• Express affection when the parent learns his/her child is gay / transgender
• Support children even if the parent feels uncomfortable
• Advocate for the child when he is mistreated because of identity
• Welcome the child’s LGBTQ+ friends into one’s home
• Support the child’s gender expression
• Believe the LGBTQ+ child can have a happy future

• Remain educated about stereotypes / myths towards homosexuality in general

Copyright © Jim Struve, LCSW, Salt Lake City, UT
What is an Ally?

• An individual who confronts heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexual privilege in themselves and others out of self-interest and a concern for the well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.
Commitment to Being an Ally

• Refrain from using demeaning words and terms
• Challenge anti-LGBTQ+ jokes or derogatory language
• Display LGBTQ+ supportive symbols
• Advocate for inclusive policies and treatment for LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming individuals in schools
• Understand your own biases
Benefits to Being an Ally

- Create closer relationships with LGBTQ+ family and friends
- Personal growth and exploration
- Use your power and voice to help others
References


Specific information was also provided by: The Gay Alliance organization and Jim Struve, LCSW located in Salt Lake City, UT.
Resources


• Centerlink. The Community of LGBT Centers. www.lgbtcenters.org/

• Equality Illinois. Advancing equal treatment and social justice through education, advocacy and protection of the rights of the LGBTQ community. www.equalityillinois.us

• GLMA. Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. www.glma.org


• Human Rights Campaign. The largest national LGBTQ civil rights organization. www.hrc.org
Resources

• **Illinois Safe Schools. The Alliance.** Offers professional development, policy advocacy and youth organizing. Also has many educational tools on topics ranging from starting a gay/straight alliance program, curricular inclusion of LGBTQ topics, legal and policy, bias based bullying, parents/families, sports/athletics, and anti-racism. Look on home page under heading RESOURCES. [www.illinoissafeschools.org](http://www.illinoissafeschools.org)

• **National Center for Transgender Equality.** [www.transequality.org](http://www.transequality.org)

• **PFLAG. Parents, Friends, and Allies of LGBTQ persons.** The nation’s largest family and ally organization. [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)


• **The Trevor Project.** The leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people ages 13-24. **FREE** resource materials. [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

Training Materials

• Advocates for Youth. www.advocatesforyouth.org
  Champions efforts that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about reproductive and sexual health. Focuses on young people ages 14-25 in the U.S. and around the globe. On home page (right column) you’ll see Parents Sex Ed Center and the Sex Education Resource Center. FREE training modules, lesson plans and resources.

• National LGBT Health Education Center. A program of Fenway Health. www.lgbthealtheducation.org
  In addition to publications, the National LGBT Health Education Center offers access to videos, webinars, learning modules (for Free CME/CEU credits) and suggested reading lists. On home page see (EDUCATION).

Training Materials


• **The Safe Zone Project.** [www.thesafezoneproject.com](http://www.thesafezoneproject.com) A free online resource for creating powerful, effective LGBTQ awareness and ally training workshops.
Reading Materials


