

Supporting Individuals that are LGBTQ

Presented By: Mary Rita Weller, Ph.D., LSW
Kutztown University
weller@kutztown.edu



Introduction

- "Internalized Homophobia" (Schwartz, 2016)
- Common assumption made by people with heteronormative beliefs
 - > Everyone is heterosexual
 - > Everyone comes from heterosexual families
 - > Children from LGBTQ families do not develop "normally" (Toomey, McGuire, & Russell, 2012)
- Health service access barriers contribute to health disparities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people (Daley & MacDonnell, 2015)
- Lack of service provider knowledge related to LGBTQ health needs & service experiences creates barriers to health services (2015)

Basic Terminology

- LGBTQ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or some instances Questioning
 - > "Queer" once considered disparate term – now celebratory
 - > Transgender – A person feels that he or she is trapped in the body of the wrong gender; a person who may undergo a sex change operation
- Sexual Orientation
 - > A person's sense of his or her own sexual orientation, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual
- Gender Identity
 - > The psychological sense of one's own maleness or femaleness
- Gender Expression
 - > How a person represents or expresses one's gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2014)

Brief History Timeline

- 1973: American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)
- June 1981: The CDC publish a [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#), describing cases of a rare lung infection, [Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia \(PCP\)](#) – 1st official reporting of what becomes known as the AIDS epidemic (AIDS.gov, 2016)
- June 2013: Landmark *Supreme Court Ruling* – Same-Sex Marriages are entitled to federal benefits
 - > Ruling struck down 1996 law blocking federal recognition of gay marriage
- Headlines: August 29, 2013
 - > All marriages will now be recognized by the US Department of Treasury for federal tax purposes

Cultural Competence

- Diverse population
 - > Races
 - > Ethnicities
 - > Ages
 - > Socio-Economic Statuses
 - > Across All Regions
- Discrimination consistently implicated as major stressor with adverse psychological effects (Meyer, 2003)

Cultural Competency???

- Implicitly
 - > Describing Heteronormative Practices
- Explicitly
 - > Expressing frustration re: insufficient training related to LGBTQ youth sexual health
- Unprepared to address individual-level issues (condom-use) or broader socio-cultural & structural conditions for socially vulnerable LGBTQ youth

(Knight, Shoveller, Carson, & Contreras-Whitney, 2014)

LGBTQ Families



- More than 6 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) parents
- Estimated 14 million children with LGBTQ families in US (Gates, 2003)

Barriers for LGBTQ Families

- Familial rights
- Employer policies
- Health benefits for children



Notable Improved Structural Interventions

- Legalized same-sex marriage
- Some schools supporting development for gay-straight alliances – seek to provide community resources & peer support



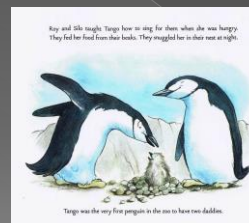
Identity Development

- Children begin to develop gender, cultural, & family identities before age of 2 (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010)
 - By age 2, children use gender labels (*girl*, *boy*)
- By age 4, children begin to show awareness of family structure
- Between ages 3 and 5, children become curious about which parts of themselves are permanent and which will change

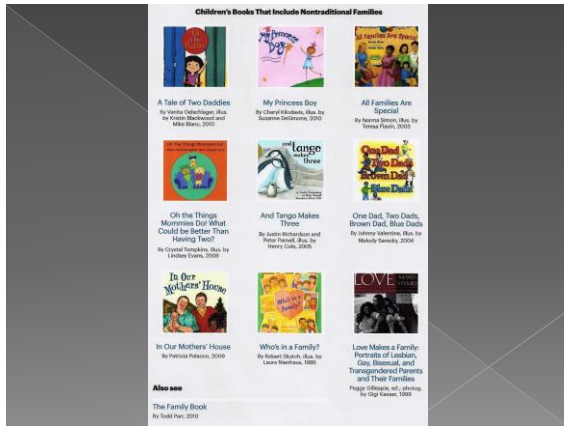
Important Skills

- Need to know how to address parents
 - Transgender parents may have physical appearance as one gender but connect emotionally & psychologically to the opposite gender
 - Get to know families & what's important to them
- Give children opportunity to listen & think critically about families
- Storytelling gives children a voice
- Be flexible about projects & addressing family members as they wish
- Continue learning about LGBTQ population as it continues to grow & as legislation continues to change

Tools



- Recognize LGBTQ people as role models, as parents, as ordinary people
- Inclusive curriculum including posters & books
- Positive visuals – photos – magazines
- Storytelling



LGBTQ Youth

- Many children of LGBTQ families experience teasing or bullying
- Negative language, i.e., "that's gay" or "homo," or body language showing discomfort or disrespect indicates unsafe environment
- LGBTQ families sometimes experience mistreatment or lack of acknowledgement from practitioners, administrators, & educators (Kosciw & Diaz, 2008)
 - "Everyone has a father!"

Unique Needs of LGBTQ Youth

- More likely to experience sexual orientation discrimination – one on one everyday from family, friends, peers, teachers
- Use illegal & injection drugs;
- Unwanted pregnancy – unprotected sex;
- Sexual abuse
- Suicidal thoughts (Knight, et al., 2014)
- Homelessness – due to family rejection
- Incarceration
 - LGBTQ youth make up 5 to 7% of general population, they make up 15 to 17% of youth in juvenile justice system (Hunt & Moodie-Mills, 2012)
- Even if they do not experience discrimination personally, the public debate around LGBTQ rights can also contribute to their sense of insecurity (Rostovsky, Riggle, Home, & Miller, 2009)



Barriers to for LGBTQ Youth Seeking Services

- Uncomfortable disclosing sexual identity &/or sexual behavior
- Fear of confidentiality breach – especially with family physicians
- Assumption of heterosexuality

College Campuses



- Continue to be unsafe for LGBTQ students
- LGBTQ students face discrimination, harassment, & violence

(Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, Frazer, 2010)

Top Ten Criteria LGBTQ Students Look For In A Campus

1. Active LGBTQ Student Organization
2. Out LGBTQ Students
3. Out LGBTQ Faculty and Staff
4. LGBTQ-Inclusive Policies
5. Visible Signs of Pride
6. Out LGBTQ Allies from the Top Down
7. LGBTQ-inclusive Housing and Gender-Inclusive Bathrooms
8. Established LGBTQ Center & Support Services
9. LGBTQ/Queer Studies Academic Major or Minor
10. Progressive Culture and Vibrant LGBTQ Social Scene

(Campus Pride, 2016)

Barriers for Clinicians

- Feeling uncomfortable & unprepared



Mental Health Issues

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in US – over 400,000 annually (CDC, 2014)
 - › LGBTQ individuals are approximately twice as likely to report suicide ideation & have higher rates of attempted suicide
- LGB individuals have higher rates of anxiety, mood, & substance use disorders (Cochran, Sullivan, & Mays, 2003)
- Study of transgender individuals reported 59% have clinically significant depression (Clemnets-Nolle, Marx, Guzman, & Katz, 2001)

Clinical Interventions

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Better educated therapists regarding LGBTQ communities and discrimination faced
- Development of open communication LGBTQ affirming language/techniques
- Office materials that display ménage of sexual/partner relationships
- Encourage clients to identify their unique strengths & resources & connections with positive formal & informal peer support networks
- For transgender clients – be respectful of their identity
 - › Ask them words & pronouns they use to identify themselves – use those & encourage other staff to as well

What You Can Do

- An organizational nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation & gender identity
- An intake form (if applicable) that has optional sexual orientation & gender identity questions
- LGBTQ competency training for all agency staff

(Ebin & Belyeu, 2016)

Know & Refer to Appropriate Resources

- Many LGBTQ people have supportive people in their lives & positive identity-related experiences
- Create & maintain LGBTQ-specific resources & services
- Connect transgender & bisexual clients to identity-specific supports (i.e., transgender social group)
 - › Can find groups online &/or ask clients

Counseling / Therapy

- Clients feel fully exposed – all of their fears up front about stereotypes you've heard – everything they fear you think about them
 - > AIDS – Sissy – Pedophile – Pervert – Fag
- Service provider education is necessary response
- Let clients guide LGBTQ disclosure with relevance to their present behavioral health concerns

• Foundational Resources:
 Culturally Competent Care for LGBTQ Youth: A SPARK Talk video from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center featuring Ashby Dodge, Clinical Director at The Trevor Project. <http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/2014-08/CC-Care-for-LGBTQ-Youth.pdf>
 The National LGBT Health Education Center: Archived webinars such as "Behavioral Health Care for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual People" and "Mental Health Care and Assessment of Transgender Adults." www.lgbthealtheducation.org

• Finding Local Resources:
 GLBT Near Me: A collection of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender resources. www.gbtnearme.org
 The Trevor Project's List of Local Resources: The leading national organization focused on suicide prevention efforts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and queer youth. www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/local-resources

• Helplines (Noncrisis-Related):
 Fenway Health LGBT Help Line and Peer Listening Line: <http://fenwayhealth.org/care/wellness/resources/help-lines>
 Trans Lifeline: www.translifeline.org

• LGBT Suicide Prevention Lifelines:
 The Trevor Project: www.thetrevorproject.org

• Professional Associations:
 APA Division 42: American Psychological Association's Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. www.apadivision42.org
 NATLGAAP: The National Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Addiction Professionals and their Allies. www.natlgap.org
 NASWDC: The National Association of Social Workers' National Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues. www.naswdc.org/governance/cmtes/inclgbt.asp

• Specific Topics and Further Learning:
 BiNet USA: Advocates for bisexual communities in the US, includes listing of local bisexual groups. www.binetusa.org
 LGBTQ Issues and Child Trauma: Best Practices and Resource List from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/trauma_lgbtq_and_child_trauma_2015.pdf
 SAGE: Services and advocacy for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender elders. www.sageusa.org
 Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC): LGBT resources. www.sprc.org/search/apachesolr_search/LGBT+liters

Associations

- American Association of Sexuality, Educators, Counselors, & Therapists (ASSET)
- Scientific Society for Sexuality



One last word...

- Be open-minded
- Nonjudgmental
- Share that you're still learning



Resources to Guide Discussion with Children

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States

<http://www.siecus.org>

ETR Associates: Advancing Science-Reducing Risks-Improving Lives

<http://www.etr.org/training-technical-assistance>

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