



WEST VIRGINIA INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Resiliency and Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth

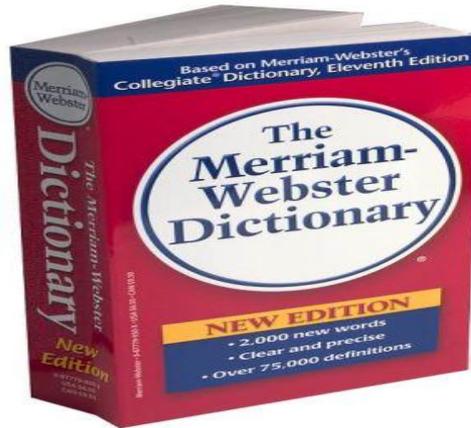
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Goals and Objectives

- To identify issues of risk, challenge and strength specific to LGBTQ youth and young adults and develop strategies that balance personal beliefs with professional responsibilities
- To increase knowledge and empathy regarding the unique stressors experienced by sexual and gender minority youth, their families and caregivers
- To demonstrate increased understanding of the issues around coming out and how they might impact youth



Definition of Terms



- Sexual Orientation- Defined by whom you are emotionally, romantically, erotically and intimately attracted to, for the most part and over a period of time. It exists on a continuum of feelings and attractions. It is NOT necessarily congruent with behavior.
- LGBTQ- An acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning



Definition of Terms

- Gay/Lesbian- A person who forms their primary loving, emotional, erotic, intimate and social connections with someone of the same sex
- Bisexual- A person who can form their primary loving, emotional, erotic, intimate and social connections with someone of any gender assignment



Definition of Terms

- Transgender- An umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. May include pre-operative transsexuals, post-operative transsexuals, cross-dressers, etc.
- Transsexual- A person whose gender identity does not match expectations with the sex assigned to them at birth.



Definition of Terms

- Intersex- Persons who are born with chromosomal and/or reproductive differences. They may have an extra or missing chromosome, have some elements of both male and female reproductive systems or have genitals that do not appear clearly male or female at birth



Risk Factors



Depression and Suicide

- 30% of all completed suicides in the U.S. are by LGBTQ (U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services)
- LGBTQ Youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth



Other Stressors/Risk Factors

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Homelessness
- School Problems/Drop Out
- Health Related Issues (eating disorders, unwanted pregnancy, HIV/STI' s)



Stage of identity development

- Pre-encounter
- Encounter
- Immersion
- Internalization
- Synthesis/Commitment



Stages of Identity Development

- PRE-ENCOUNTER
- The individual sees themselves as belonging in the mainstream. Often has no information/exposure to other identity groups. Defenses can be quite high during this stage.



Stages of Identity Development

- ENCOUNTER
- Initial exposure to gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgendered concept. The encounters may be thoughts, feelings and/or behaviors with someone of the same sex or may be intellectual, academic or social exposure to information. Vulnerability and confusion can be quite high during this stage. Internalized homophobia may play out significantly during this time.



Stages of Identity Development

- IMMERSION- The “sponge” stage. The individual begins to explore aspects related to their sexuality. This may include intellectual, social, physical and/or sexual experiences. “Rehearsal play” may occur where the individual “practices” various aspects of this newfound identity- often causing confusion and/or alienation to those around them. This stage is necessary for a healthy sense of self- can occur at any age.



Stages of Identity Development



- INTERNALIZATION
- The acceptance stage of identity development. I understand this to be who I am. This often results in a sense of grief and loss in addition to clarity and acceptance.



Stages of Identity Development



- SYNTHESIS & COMMITMENT
- Now the individual begins the process of addressing the other life issues that all people face (relationship forming, career goals, family formation, etc.). Includes a profound understanding that not everyone will accept this part of who I am but that does not change my sense of self.

Cultural Factors



Cultural Factors

- Ethnicity
- Race
- Economics
- Cognitive Abilities
- Community Factors (urban/rural,etc.)
- Religion



How to respond when a youth comes out to you

- Anticipate feelings of vulnerability
- Affirm, validate and show acceptance
- Start where the client is
- Avoid labeling
- Follow the youth's lead in terminology
- Provide accurate information that avoids myths and stereotypes
- Do not assume that their problems/issues are necessarily related to their sexual orientation/gender identity



Organizational Culture

- Policies of your organization
 - Formal
 - Informal
- Practices of your organization
 - Forms
 - Intake Procedure
 - Language



Creating a Welcoming Environment



- Posters, showing racially and ethnically diverse, same-sex couples, individuals and/or families
- Books/magazines with the words gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender visible
- LGBTQ friendly stickers or symbols posted in offices or on doors or bulletin boards (rainbow flag, HRC symbol, etc)
- A universal, gender inclusive or gender neutral restroom



Community Resources



- Know what's available in your community
- Be sure to ask “specifically” how often a referral source has worked “directly” with l/g/b/t clients
- Utilize the internet
- Utilize “informed” colleagues/peers



SERVING LGBT YOUTH
IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

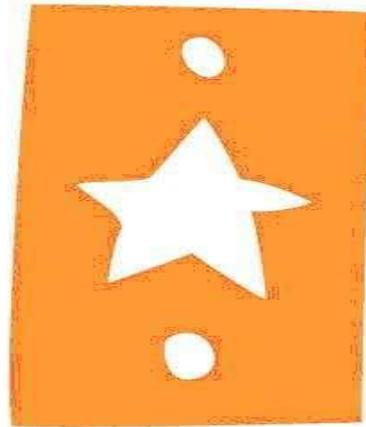
CWLA Best Practice Guidelines

SHANNAN WILBER,
CAITLIN RYAN, AND
JODY MARKSAMER

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA



Resources



The Trevor Helpline
866.4.U.TREVOR
FOR LGBT AND QUESTIONING YOUTH
FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7

- The Trevor Project: A national 24-hour, toll free confidential suicide hotline for gay and questioning youth
 - <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
 - 866-4-U-Trevor (866-488-7386)



Resources

- Family Acceptance Project : (FAP) is a community research, intervention and training initiative to study the impact of family acceptance and rejection on the health, mental health and well-being of lesbian, gay and bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth
 - **familyproject.sfsu.edu**
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays : National organization for education, advocacy and support for families and friends of LGBT persons. Chapters are available in all states – check website for local chapters and educational materials for families

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Resources

- Children of Gays Everywhere: (COLAGE) National organization for children of LGBT parents
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- Family Pride Coalition: National organization to provide advocacy and support for LGBT parents and their families
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Resources

- Gender Pac: Organization to provide education and promote advocacy to end discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes. National conference, training, gender law information, resources for transgender youth



RESOURCES

- GLSEN : Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network
 - National organization for advocacy and information to promote safer schools.
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- GSA Network: Gay, Straight Alliance Network: Youth-led organization to provide networking and support for GSAs
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On Line Resources for Youth

- Youth Resource: Online peer-based sexual health education by and for LGBTQ youth ages 13-24. Includes peer health educators, info for LGBT youth of color, young women, deaf, and rural youth

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en Español

- Youth Guardian Services: On-line peer-supervised support groups for LGBT youth (ages 13-17, 17-21, and 21-25), and youth with an LGBT family member.

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Books

- Child Welfare : Special Issue: LGBTQ Youth in Child Welfare (VO. LXXXV #2, March/April 2006)
- Lesbian and Gay Youth: Ryan, Caitlin & Futterman, Donna
- Let' s Get This Straight: A Gay and Lesbian Affirming Approach to Child Welfare: Mallon, Gary
- Lesbian and Gay Foster and Adoptive Parents: An Untapped Resource for Children and Families : Mallon, Gary

