



Providing Services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth

Understanding the Impact of Societal Homophobia and Healing It

Why are we talking about this?



- While there are no accurate numbers of LGBT youth in care, there is a need to provide affirming care and services to those youth who are in out of home care
- LGBT youth may experience traumatic events that are linked to their LGBT status
- Cultural and Linguistic Competency – being able to appropriately discuss and address the needs of LGBT youth

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Guidelines



- Treat one another with respect
- Permission to pass
- Confidentiality
- Ouch/Oops - hurtful comment, apology
- Snaps - indicating agreement
- Others? Giving everyone a chance to participate

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The Impact of Silence Activity



- List the three most important people or relationships in your life.
- List three places that have special meaning to you.
- List three topics of conversation that you and your friends usually discuss.
- List three leisure time activities you enjoy.



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Societal Homophobia



- What is Homophobia?
 - An irrational fear of or aversion to homosexuality or lesbian, gay or bisexual people
 - Prejudice, discrimination, harassment, etc.
- What does it look like?
- Messages and messengers

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Possible effects of homophobia:



- Feelings of isolation, shame, and loneliness
- Verbal and physical harassment at home, school, churches and communities
- Becoming sexually active before they really want to in heterosexual relationships in order to hide their sexual orientation
- Self-medicating with drugs and alcohol
- Running away and attempting suicide

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Internalized Homophobia

- Internalized Homophobia can result in:
 - Depression
 - Poor academic performance/school drop out
 - Substance abuse/addiction
 - Becoming socially withdrawn
 - Behaviors that can lead to health risks, STI's, and pregnancy
 - Suicidal thoughts and attempts

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Internalized homophobia:

- May increase the risk for trauma and/or reduce resilience
- Can cause negative views of self
- Disrupts the coming out process
- May lead to an inverse relationship between internalized homophobia/discomfort with one's sexual identity and the likelihood that the individual is out to friends and others

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Risks of Isolation

- Severe social, emotional and cognitive isolation result in
- Higher incidence of mental health issues
 - Significant substance abuse problems
 - Higher incidence of homelessness, dropping out, running away and sexual acting out
 - Higher risks of HIV/AIDS
 - Higher incidence of suicide attempts and suicide plans
 - Heightened risk for homeless LGBTQ youth
 - Vulnerability to involvement with the juvenile justice system

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Stages of the Coming Out Process

- Stage One: Awareness
- Stage Two: Acknowledgment
- Stage Three: Tolerance
- Stage Four: Acceptance
- Stage Five: Pride
- Stage Six: Synthesis



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Cultural Factors

- Ethnicity and/or Race
- Religion
- Socio-economic status
- Community Factors (urban/rural, etc.)

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Remember when...

- Was there a time in your life when you were made fun of or harassed because you were different?
- Imagine feeling that way all day every day



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School Climate Survey

- Conducted by the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, a national nonprofit organization, encourages the creation of school environments that are safe for all students
- Surveys LGBT students across the country every two years, these are some of the 2009 and 2013 findings



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School Climate Survey

	2009	2013
Heard homophobic remarks frequently or often*	72.4%	64.5%
Heard transphobic remarks frequently or often		33.1%
Feel unsafe due to sexual orientation	61.1%	55.5%
Feel unsafe due to gender expression	39.9%	37.8%
Missed one day of school due to safety concerns	30%	30.3%

*55.5% Heard these comments from teachers and staff

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School Climate Survey – Harassment and Assault

Due to Sexual Orientation	2009	2013
Verbal Harassment	84.6%	74.1%
Physical Harassment	40.1%	36.2%
Physical Assault	18.8%	16.5%
Sexual Harassment		59.3%
Electronic Harassment		49.0%

Due to Gender Expression	2009	2013
Verbal Harassment	63.7%	55.2%
Physical Harassment	27.2%	22.7%
Physical Assault	12.5%	11.4%

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School Climate Survey



- 56.7% did not report the incident, mainly because they feared the situation would worsen or school would do nothing
- 61.6% of the students that *did* make reports, said that the school staff did nothing in response
- 75.2% of LGBT students in schools with an inclusive curriculum said their peers were accepting of LGBT people, compared to 39.6% of those without an inclusive curriculum

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What can you do to make a difference?



- Be familiar with LGBT resources and community supports
- Be supportive of coming out decisions – understand possible consequences and safety issues
- Avoid assigning an identity (LGBT) before the individual has had time to explore different identities or is ready to self-identify
- Ensure paperwork and policies are inclusive and non-discriminatory

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References



- The 2009 National School Climate Survey, A Report from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, www.glsen.org
- Out of the Margins, A Report on Regional Listening Forums Highlighting the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth in Care, 2006
- CWLA Best Practice Guidelines, Serving LGBT Youth in Out of Home Care, 2006

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References

- "Providing Services and Supports for Youth who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex or Two-Spirit, Practice Brief," The National Center for Cultural Competence, Center for Mental Health Services, Child, Adolescent and Family Branch; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

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Websites

- www.glsen.org
- www.hatchyouth.org
- www.plaghouston.org
- www.tolerance.org
- www.thinkb4youspeak.com
- <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>
- http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_protection/foster_care/rights.asp
- (<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/195-lessons>)

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Thank You!

Service Management Teams are available for you for additional assistance and resource information

866-218-8263



Personal Beliefs

- What are your thoughts, beliefs, attitudes toward LGBT people?
- What are your thoughts, beliefs, attitudes about homosexual behavior?
- How comfortable are you confronting anti-LGBT attitudes or behavior?
- How might you respond to hearing someone say, "That's so gay"?

website: ThinkB4YouSpeak

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Organizational Culture

- Policies of your organization -
 - Formal – Are they in writing?
 - Informal – Are there negative attitudes or behaviors that are not addressed?
- Practices of your organization
 - Forms
 - Intake procedures
 - Language

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"Out of the Margins"

- "Out of the Margins" is a report on findings from Regional Listening Forums where LGBT youth in care, former youth in care, and adults who work with them talked about their experiences.
- Published by the Child Welfare League of America and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
- Following are actual quotes from LGBT youth in foster care

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"Out of the Margins"



"I got jumped by a bunch of guys in my group home, and when I told the Director he said, 'Well if you weren't a f____, they wouldn't beat you up.'"

- Youth Participant

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"Out of the Margins"



"It became real clear to me that my caseworker wouldn't be able to handle it if I came out (to her). A couple of times I tried to hint around...but she just wasn't hearing any of it. And she was always asking me about my 'girlfriends.' So, when she found me a foster home, I knew I couldn't count on her to have made sure they'd be cool with my being gay. I was afraid to tell my foster family too. So, more time in the closet for me."

- Youth participant

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"Out of the Margins"



"It wasn't just the other kids who called me 'f____,' It was the staff too. I had nowhere to go for help."

- Youth participant

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