LGBTQIA, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Creating Safe & Supportive Communities for ALL of Our Youth

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Purpose of Today’s Training

- Increase awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ) community.
- Increase awareness of Gender & Gender Dysphoria
- Identify health disparities for LGBTIQ community such as substance abuse, bullying, harassment, self-harm and suicide.
- Help you create a safe environment for LGBTIQ youth.
- Provide community resources for LGBTIQ youth, adults, families and providers.
- Purpose of 3x5 cards
Agreements for Today’s Training

- Open Dialogue: Ask questions
- Speak from “I”
- Be Open to New Ideas
- Respect Differing Opinions and Experiences
Identity Exercise

- Write down 3 of your identities that are most important to you

- What if......?

- What would......?
“My name is Jacob Rudolph. I am an LGBT teen. I am not broken. I am not confused. I do not need to be fixed.”

Jacob Rudolph, March 18, 2013
New Jersey Senate Health Committee testimony on anti-LGBT "conversion therapy"

www.GSEquality.org
GLBTQ - What Do We Mean?

- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity
  - Sexual Orientation
    - Gay
    - Lesbian
    - Bisexual
    - Questioning
    - And More....
The Spectrum of Gender Identity

- **Biological or anatomical sex**: The person’s physical anatomy that is used to assign gender at birth
- **Gender Identity**: The person’s internalized sense of being male, female, both or neither. This is personally defined and not visible to others
- **Gender Expression**: This is how we externalize our gender (clothing, mannerisms, social interactions, roles,
- **Gender Variant or Gender Non-conforming**: A person’s behaviors or interests that fall outside what is considered normal for a person’s assigned biological sex. (Type of play, clothing, expression, etc.)
The Spectrum of Gender Identity

- Gender fluidity: Gender expression is fluid, may change day to day with identity, appearance & behaviors.

- Gender Queer: Identifying outside the realm of gender and sexual orientation definitions. Not binary.

- Two Spirit: Native American term used for “third gender folks” used to describe LGBTI members of the Native American community. Also relates to those who exhibit a balance of masculine & feminine energies.

- Transgender: An individual whose gender identity does not match their birth gender.
  - Male to Female (M2F)
  - Female to Male (F2M)
The Spectrum of Gender Identity

- **Intersex**: Persons born with an anomaly of their chromosomal development. Their external genitalia and internal sexual organs are not clearly defined. Also called DSD or Disorders of Sex Development.

- **Cisgender**: A person’s gender is congruent with their biological sex.

- **Drag Queens & Kings**: Dress as opposite gender for entertainment purposes.
Gender Dysphoria

- Gender Dysphoria can be expressed in a number of ways:
  - Strong dislike or hate for the physical body
  - Difficulty with daily tasks such as showering, picking out clothes, shopping for clothes
  - Medical care becomes neglected
  - Self harm
Factors that cause increased stress

- Bathrooms
- Gym class
- Locker rooms
- Peer activities such as camp outs
- Swimming
- Shopping for clothes
Gender Dysphoria

- Outcomes include:
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Isolation
  - Increased Fear
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Dissociation
  - And more….
Transgender or Gender Variant??

Gender identity emerges about the time a child begins to speak.

Can be more challenging for boys than girls due to sexism and what is acceptable of boys vs. girls.

If a child isn’t out as transgender during childhood then the identity will begin to re-emerge around 9-14 with early puberty and body changes.

Next stage for coming out is late adolescence with a greater sense of their self and their own being.

Youth may come out around gay, lesbian or bisexual and then later come out as transgender instead.
The Spectrum of Gender Identity

- For children that are gender fluid, resist the urge to make them choose for your own comfort.
- Become an advocate for safety & support
- Most gender variant individuals are not transgender: their social expression is non-conforming but not their internal sense of gender
- Gender variant role models
- Identifying as trans or being stealth/passing
GLSEN 2013 National School Climate Survey (7,898 GLBT students, ages 13-21)

- 74.1% had been verbally harassed at school.
- 39% had been physically harassed at school.
- 56% of GLB students felt unsafe at school.
- 75% of transgender students felt unsafe at school.
- 19% had been the victim of a physical assault at school.
LGBT students who did not have (or did not know of) a policy protecting them from violence and harassment were nearly 40% more likely to skip school because they were simply too afraid to go.

82.9% of students report faculty never or rarely intervene when present.
GLSEN Survey continued

- LGBT students who did not have (or did not know of) a policy protecting them from violence and harassment were nearly 43% more likely to skip school because they were simply too afraid to go
- 50% of students heard homophobic remarks from faculty & staff
- Staff intervention matters:
  - 69.7% of students felt unsafe when faculty or staff “never or only sometimes intervened”
  - 47.5% of student felt unsafe when faculty or staff “most or always intervened”
LGB youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide.

LGBT youth are more likely to be homeless.

Gay men are at higher risk of HIV and other STDs, especially among communities of color.

Lesbians and bisexual females are more likely to be overweight or obese.

LGBT populations have the highest rates of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.
Transgender individuals have a high prevalence of HIV/STDs, victimization, mental health issues, and suicide and are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual or LGB individuals.

Additional Data:

One study showed that approximately 33% of all transgender youth have attempted suicide. (Clements-Nolle, 2006)

Studies have shown that up to a third of transgender people are struggling with high rates of substance abuse, depression and suicidal thoughts or attempts. (American Psychological Association, 2008)
Coming Out Process

- US Average GLB youth coming out age is 10-13 years
- Coming out to self
- Coming out to family/friends = “inviting you into my life”
- Coming out to everyone else = “this is who I am”
- On-going process
- Weighing the benefits and costs of coming out
- Many would agree this process is important because it helps a person come to terms with who s/he is
- Different stages in the process come with different expectations of entitlement!
Coming Out Process for Family, Friends & Partners

- Families & Friends have their own coming out process
- Partners also have a coming out process
- Experiencing fear & shame
- Parents placing blame on one another
- Grief & loss...the loss of dreams held for children
- Impacts on siblings: fear, embarrassment, being bullied, pride, protection....
- Parenting challenges:
  - Understanding the difference between homophobia and setting boundaries
The Voices of Our GLOBE Youth Panel

- Isaac, Krist & Mina
Ways To Be Supportive

- Create a safe & supportive environment.
- Evaluate your own ability to work with GLBTQ; be open to continuous learning.
- Provide posters, books, videos, resources that reflect support for GLBTQ.
- Challenge anti-GLBTQ harassment and name-calling.
- Stop the inappropriate behavior.
- Educate – Teachable Moments (meaning of “faggot”).
Ways To Be Supportive continued

- Create equitable policies.
- Assure targeted individuals that they deserve a safe environment.
- Educate staff and youth on anti-GLBTQ harassment and the impact on youth and staff.
- Gender neutral language: Don’t assume anything about sexual orientation or gender identity (think forms, signs).
- Support for GSAs (Gay Straight Alliances).
- “Use Another Word Campaign”.
References Used Today

- The Transgender Child by Stephanie Brill & Rachel Pepper
- Gender Dysphoria by American Psychiatric Publishing
- The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) www.path.org/publicationsstandards.cfm
What makes an inclusive environment?

- Posted, inclusive policies and procedures
- Books
- At least one gender-neutral, single stall bathroom
- Openly LGBTQ adults (staff, volunteers)
Resources

www.safeschoolscoalition.org

crises: 1-877-SAFE-SAFE
info: 206-451-SAFE
Community Resources

- GLOBE
- Safe Schools Coalition
- PFLAG
- Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network (GLSEN)
- Snohomish County Long Term Care & Aging
- Faith communities that are open & affirming
- School and agency trainings
To remember who you are, you need to forget who they told you to be.
Further Questions - Closing Dialogue

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