

# ***Fundamentals in Effective Work with LGBTQIA+ Youth***



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# Goals and Objectives

- To explore and expand the use of culturally appropriate language as an engagement tool in working with LGBTQIA+ youth
- To identify issues of risk, challenge and strength specific to LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults and develop strategies that balance personal beliefs with professional responsibilities
- To explore the important role that families and other supportive adults can serve to help minimize long term adverse consequences for LGBTQIA+ youth
- To identify national and local resources for this population

# Alphabet Soup



# Definition of Terms

- LGBTQQIA+- An acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual et. al
- 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.

# Definition of Terms

- Gay/lesbian- A person who forms their primary loving, emotional, erotic, intimate and social connects with someone of the same sex role assignment
- 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.
- Cisgender- A person whose gender identity matches their sex role assignment

# Definition of Terms

- Gender Identity- An inner psychological sense of oneself as a male, female, both, neither or something else. This refers to the gender with which one identifies regardless of one's sex
- Gender Expression- The communication of gender through behaviors (e.g. mannerisms, dress, speech patterns, etc.) and appearance. Societal definitions of gender can greatly influence these communications

# 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
- Queer- An umbrella term for sexual and/or gender minorities. It can be used positively or negatively

# Definition of Terms

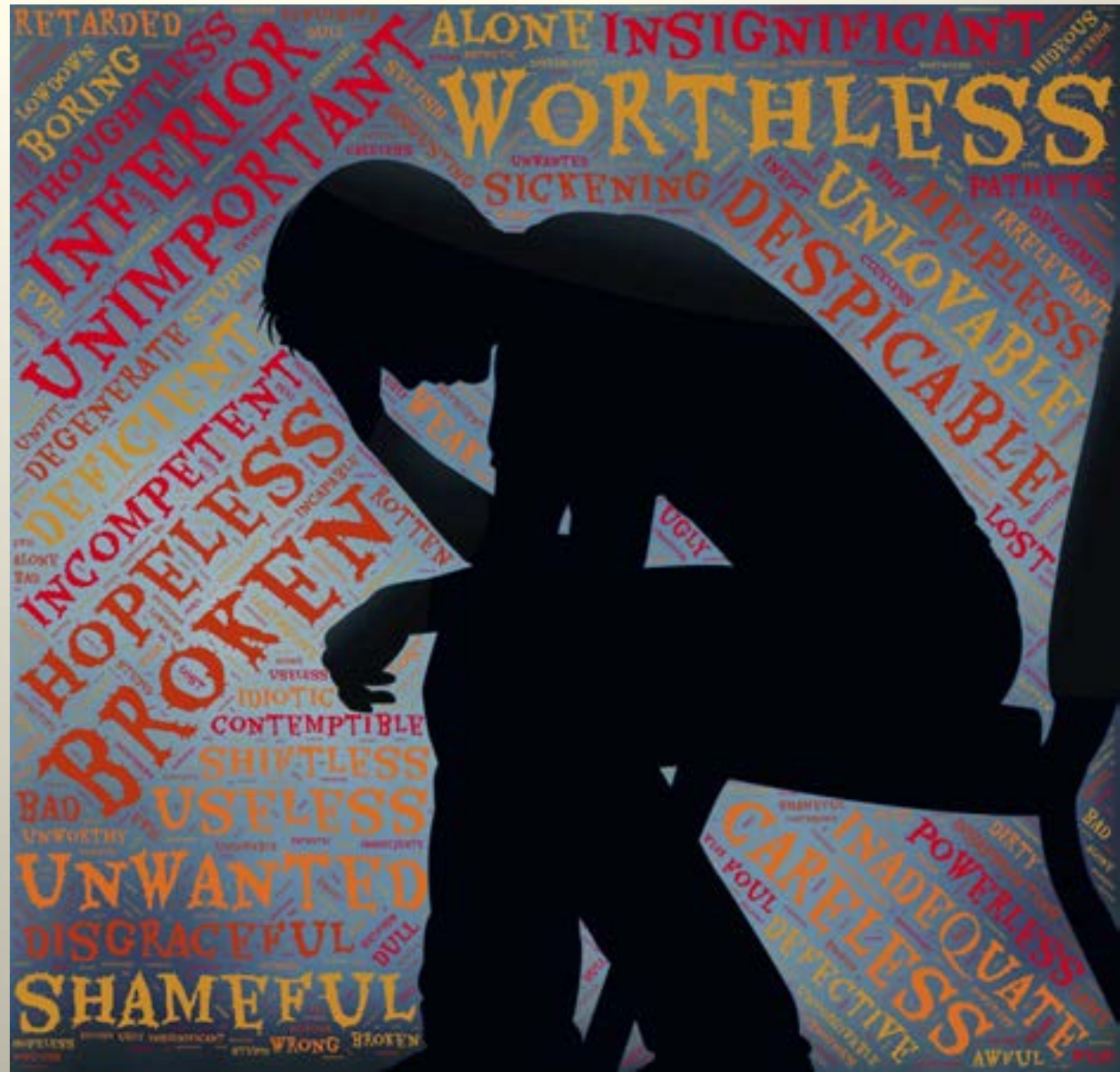
- Genderqueer- A person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both or a combination of male and female
- Pansexual-Sexual attraction towards people of any sex role assignment or gender identity
- Asexual- A sexual orientation in which the person experiences no sexual attraction and little if any sexual desire



# Definition of Terms

- 2 Spirited- A term used by SOME native American/Alaskan natives/Indigenous people to describe variations in sexual orientation and or gender identity
- Latinx- A gender neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina
- Sexual fluidity/gender fluidity- The idea that our attractions and/or our sense of gender is not static and can change over time or related to circumstances

# Risk Factors



# Depression and Suicide

- 30% of all completed suicides in the U.S. are by GLBTQ (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)
- The rate of suicide attempts is 4 times greater for LGB youth and 2 times greater for questioning youth than that of straight youth.
  - *CDC. (2016). Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*
- In a national study, 40% of transgender adults reported having made a suicide attempt. 92% of these individuals reported having attempted suicide before the age of 25.
  - *James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.*

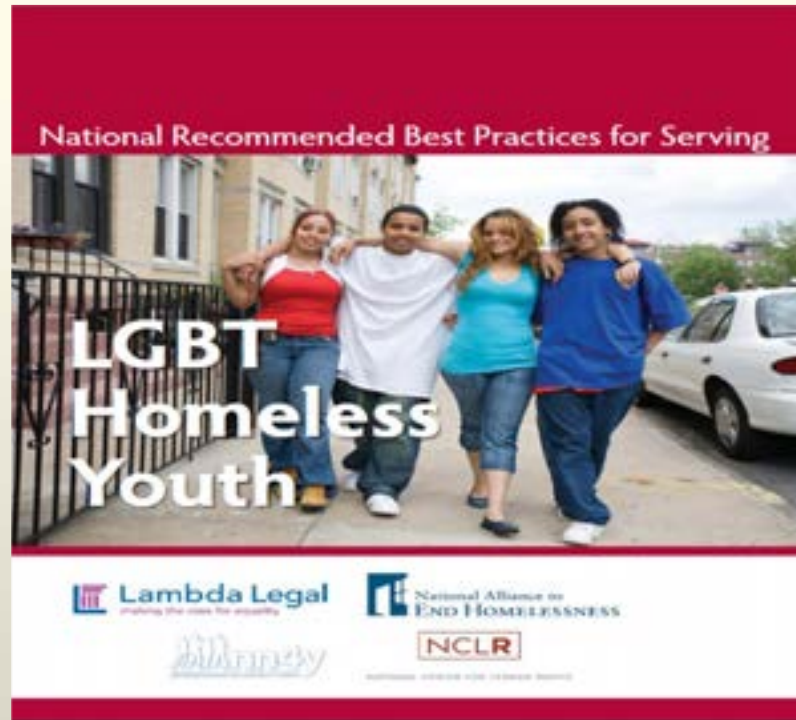
# Substance Abuse

- In 2015, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (administered by the Department of Health and Human Services) added two questions on sexual orientation, one for sexual identity and one for sexual attraction, making it the **first** nationally representative, comprehensive source of federally collected information on substance use and mental health issues among sexual minority adults. Sexual minorities were more likely than their sexual majority counterparts to have substance use and mental health issues.

# Substance Abuse

- Sexual minorities were more likely than their sexual majority counterparts to have substance use and mental health issues.
- Youth who experienced a moderate level of family rejection were 1.5 times more likely to use illegal substances than those who experienced little to no rejection; youth experiencing high levels of family rejection were 3.5 times more likely to use these substances. (Family Acceptance Project)

# Homelessness



- LGBTQ youth may be thrown out of their homes or experience violence resulting from adult response to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- 40% of homeless youth served by agencies identified as lgbtq (Williams Institute, 2012)

# Sexual Abuse

- 23% of LGB students who had dated or went out with someone during the past 12 months had experienced sexual dating violence in the prior year
  - Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- 18% of LGB students had been forced to have sexual intercourse at some point in their lives
  - Kann L, Olsen EO, McManus T, et al. [Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in](#)

[Grades 9-12 – United States and Selected Sites, 2015](#). MMWR Surveill Summ 2016; 65(9): 1-202. •

# Additional Risk Factors

- In one study LGB teens were found to be 190 percent more likely to use drugs and alcohol than their heterosexual peers (Marshal, 2008)
- Lesbian and bisexual youth are up to seven times more likely to get pregnant than their heterosexual peers (Saewyc, 2008)



# 2015 National School Climate Survey ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org))



- 85% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation or their gender expression
- 44% of LGBT students reported missing at least one day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe in school

# 2015 National School Climate Survey ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org))

- Almost all of LGBTQ students (98.1%) students heard “gay” used in a negative way (e.g., “that’s so gay”) at school; 67.4% heard these remarks frequently or often, and 93.4% reported that they felt distressed because of this language.
- 95.8% of LGBTQ students heard other types of homophobic remarks (e.g., “dyke” or “faggot”); 58.8% heard this type of language frequently or often.

# 2015 National School Climate Survey ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org))

- 27.0% of LGBTQ students were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 20.3% because of their gender expression.
- 13.0% of LGBTQ students were physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked, injured with a weapon) in the past year because of their sexual orientation and 9.4% because of their gender expression.

# 2015 National School Climate Survey ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org))

- 48.6% of LGBTQ students experienced electronic harassment in the past year (via text messages or postings on Facebook), often known as cyberbullying.
- 59.6% of LGBTQ students were sexually harassed (e.g., unwanted touching or sexual remarks) in the past year at school.

# 2015 National School Climate Survey ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org))

- 57.6% of LGBTQ students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident to school staff, most commonly because they doubted that effective intervention would occur or the situation could become worse if reported.
- 63.5% of the students who did report an incident said that school staff did nothing in response or told the student to ignore it.

# Risk > Disproportionality

- It is estimated that LGBT youth represent 5 to 7 percent of the nation's overall youth population but compose 13 to 15 percent of those in the juvenile justice system

(Hunt and Moodie-Mills, 2012)

# Risk > Disproportionality

- **LGBTQ youth were found to be twice as likely as their heterosexual peers to be arrested and detained for status offenses and other nonviolent offenses (Irvine, 2010)**
- **2012 Bureau of Justice Statistics study found roughly 12 percent of youth in juvenile justice facilities across the country identified as non heterosexual**



# Stage of identity development





# Pre-Encounter



# 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.

# Encounter



# 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.

# Immersion



# 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.

# Internalization



# 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.



# Synthesis and Commitment



# 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

- Ethnicity
- Race
- Religion
- Economics
- Cognitive Abilities
- Community Factors (urban/Rurales.)

# Organizational Culture

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

# Family Response



# Family Support System

- Does the family know that sexual identity is an issue for the client?
- How has the family responded to other diversity issues amongst family members
- Family Acceptance Project Findings (SFSU)
- Safety issues
- Legal/ethical issues

# Family Acceptance Project



# Family Acceptance Project

- LGB youth who reported higher levels of rejection during adolescence were:
- 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide
- 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression
- 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs
- 3.4 times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse



# The impact of positive family acceptance

- Just a little change, from no acceptance to a little acceptance makes a HUGE change in the risk factors for LGBT youth:
- Can cut the risk in half!
- Supporting families is important
- Focus on child/youth not on religious values or beliefs
- If there is limited family or caregiver support, help them make positive connections to reduce risk
- Caitlin Ryan: Cesar Chavez Institute, San Francisco State University

# 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

# Sexual Health Principles \*

- Consensual
- Non-exploitive
- Honest
- Shared Values
- Protection from STI's/HIV/Unwanted Pregnancies
- Pleasure
- \*Used with permission of Doug Braun-Harvey



"PrEP is my wake up call to a reality that I need to protect myself and stop putting my life in others' hands."

via Christopher Wilson  
Rochester, NY

<http://myprepexperience.blogspot.com>

# Standards of Care for Transgender People

- World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)

[www.wpath.org](http://www.wpath.org)

- **Vision** to bring together diverse professionals dedicated to developing best practices and supportive policies worldwide that promote health, research, education, respect, dignity, and equality for transgender and gender variant people in all cultures.

# 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

# 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

# Resources



- 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)





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THE NATIONAL LGBTQ SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Point Foundation (Point) is the nation's largest scholarship-granting organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students of merit. Point promotes change through scholarship funding, mentorship, leadership development, and community service training.

# Resources

- HRC :The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality
  - [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)
- Child Welfare League of America: Children's advocacy organization active in lobbying and humanitarian projects in the US.
  - [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)
- National Center of Lesbian Rights: A legal **center** with a primary commitment to advancing the **rights** and safety of lesbians and their families
  - [www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)

# 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
  - [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

# Resources

- Children of Gays Everywhere: (COLAGE) National organization for children of LGBT parents
  - [www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org)
- Family Equality Council: National organization to provide advocacy and support for LGBT parents and their families
  - <http://www.familyequality.org>

# RESOURCES

- GLSEN : Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network
  - National organization for advocacy and information to promote safer schools.
  - [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)
- GSA Network: Gay, Straight Alliance Network: Youth-led organization to provide networking and support for GSAs
  - [www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)

# Resources

- The Equity Project.. an initiative to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth in juvenile delinquency courts are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

<http://www.equityproject.org>

- Lambda Legal... [www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

# Resources

- **NDTAC FACT SHEET: IMPROVING SERVICES FOR YOUTH WHO ARE LGBT IN JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS**
- This fact sheet serves as a resource to enhance the capacity of State and local administrators and practitioners to improve policies and practices that promote the safe, inclusive treatment of youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) in juvenile justice systems. The document explores the experiences of youth who are LGBT generally, their entry into and experiences within juvenile justice systems, and recommendations for policy and practice. Additional resources for improving juvenile justice services are presented at the end of the document. <http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/>

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