LGBTQ SENSITIVITY IN PRACTICE

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Cultural Competence Symposium
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TODAY’S GOALS

• To recognize the differing identities and unique needs within the LGBTQ community.
• To develop the skills to become open and affirming clinicians when working with LGBTQ patients and families.
• To identify ways to improve the quality of care given to LGBTQ patients and families.
IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW

- LGBTQ - umbrella term
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Straight - refers to sexual orientation
- Transgender, Cisgender, Gender Variant - refers to gender identity
- Questioning
- Queer
- Intersex
- Ally
- The PFLAG National Glossary of Terms: over 40 terms
  - http://community.pflag.org/glossary
The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female / Woman / Girl
- Male / Man / Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other / Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

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Trans Student Educational Resources
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

• Why is the language changing?
  • Older terms carry stigma
  • Term like homosexual have become outdated
  • The community has become more empowered to identify their own language vs. being labelled by our culture/medical/mental health/other

• What is “preferred” language?
  • Identifying terms that come from the individual – not put onto them
  • Transgender identity - name, pronouns

• Respecting preferred language is very important
LGBTQ HEALTH DISPARITIES

• **2009 Study by the Center for American Progress**
  • Heterosexual adults are more likely to have insurance than LGBTQ Adults
  • LGBTQ Adults are more likely to delay medical treatment
  • Lesbian and bisexual women less likely to receive mammograms
  • LGBT Adults and Youth are more likely to report suicidal ideation, with the highest rates in the transgender community
  • LGBT Adults are more likely to have issues with alcoholism
  • LGBT Adults and Youth are more likely to smoke

• **2011 Study by the National Center for Transgender Equality**
  • 50% of transgender individuals report educating their healthcare provider
  • 28% postponed medical care due to discrimination

• **2010 Study by Lambda Legal**
  • 56% of LGB and 70% of transgender individuals reported one of the following scenarios: being refused medical care, medical professionals refusing to touch them, abusive language, being blamed for their health status, or physical abuse
“Due to factors like low rates of health insurance coverage, high rates of stress due to systematic harassment and discrimination, and a lack of cultural competency in the health care system, LGBT people are at a higher risk for cancer, mental illnesses, and other diseases, and are more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, and engage in other risky behaviors.” (Center for American Progress)
ASSESSING YOUR PERSONAL BELIEFS

• What were the earliest messages you received about LGBTQ people and where did they come from?

• Do you think you have internalized some of the anti-LGBTQ messages pervasive in our world?

• If someone were to come out to you as LGBTQ, what would your first thought be?

• How would you feel if a family member came out to you as LGBTQ?

• If you do not identify as LGBTQ, how would you feel if people thought you were LGBTQ?

• How might your beliefs influence your interactions with LGBTQ patients and families?
LGBTQ BIAS AND BELIEF

• Recognizing your own biases is an important first step in becoming an ally.

• Anti-LGBTQI bias is all around us – anti-LGBTQI jokes, the exclusion of LGBTQI related themes in media and culture, even anti- LGBTQI name-calling.

• The more aware we are of our own biases and their impact on our behavior, the easier it is to ensure that our personal beliefs don’t undermine our efforts to support LGBTQI people.

• Everyone’s belief systems are different, our goal is not to change them - but to be aware of how they impact our interactions as clinicians
OPEN AND AFFIRMING

- Open: Allowing access, not closed or blocked
- Affirming: State as a fact; assert strongly and publicly

- When you present yourself as open- anyone, no matter who they are, where they come from, or where they are going is welcome.
- In order to affirm without judgment you must truly value and want to KNOW the other person.
- Affirmation is the step past openness.
HOW TO RESPOND WHEN SOMEONE COMES OUT

• When someone comes out to you and tells you that they are LGBTQ your initial response is important.
• The person has likely spent time in advance thinking about whether or not to tell you, and when and how to tell you.
• Offer support but don’t assume a person needs any help.
• Be a role model of acceptance.
• Appreciate the person’s willingness to share and trust in you.
• Listen, listen, listen.
• Assure and respect confidentiality.
• Ask questions that demonstrate understanding, acceptance and compassion.
WAYS YOU CAN BE OPEN AND AFFIRMING

• **Use neutral and inclusive language**
  - How a question is asked can communicate acceptance
  - Check your language for assumptions - Use non-gender-specific language (e.g. partner, significant other instead of boyfriend, girlfriend, wife, husband, etc.)

• **Listen to and reflect the patient’s choice of language regarding their identity, relationships, partner or family structure**
  - Never assign a label to a person’s sexual orientation by inference
  - Do not make assumptions about people’s identity
  - Remember that any individual can be LGBTQ, regardless of appearance, behavior, age, self-identification, socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, ability/disability, or culture

• **Respect transgender individuals name and pronouns**
  - If you are not sure, ask:
    - “how would you like to be addressed?”
    - “what name would you like to be called”
    - “which pronoun is appropriate”

• **Do not ask questions about a person’s transgender status if the motivation for the question is only your own curiosity and is unrelated to care, it is inappropriate and can quickly create a discriminatory environment**

*Adapted from the Intermountain Cultural Guide*
WAYS YOU CAN BE OPEN AND AFFIRMING, CONT.

• Make remarks showing that you are aware and supportive of LGBTQ people and that you are not judgmental
• Display LGBTQ safe space sticker or something similar
• Engage co-workers and colleagues about anti-LGBTQI bias and ways to create safer spaces
• Respond to anti-LGBTQ Behavior
• Include diversity in your materials
• Know the LGBTQ resources in your community
RESOURCES

National Resources

• Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
• Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
• Gay & Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD)
• National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)
• Trans Lifeline
• The Trevor Project

Local/Utah Resources

• Local PFLAG Chapters
  • SLC, Provo, St. George, Ephraim, Price, Logan
• Transgender Education Advocates (TEA)
• Utah Pride Center
• LGBTQ – Affirmative Therapist Guild Of Utah
• Equality Utah
• Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
• Outreach Resource Center
REFERENCES


Thank you!!

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