Supporting LGBT Children and Youth: Resources, Strategies, and Action Planning

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AIR’s Health & Social Development Program

Purpose:
• We promote well-being and improve outcomes for children, youth, families, and communities by building individual, workforce, and organizational capacity.

Approaches:
• We work within and foster collaboration across systems—mental health/substance abuse, juvenile justice, child welfare, health, and education—strengthening their capacity to use evidence–based strategies.
• Using research and data, we plan, transform, and evaluate policies and practices and design new studies to measure impact and generate new knowledge.
• We engage stakeholders and consumers, enabling their voices to shape the policies and services that affect them.
Our Objectives for Today: You Will Learn About…

1. Key LGBTQ **concepts and terms**, some **research** on LGBTQ child/youth populations, and how this information can be used **to address stigma/bias and disparities** affecting LGBTQ children and youth.

2. How to **assess behaviors and practices** at both personal and organizational levels.

3. How to apply **10 standards of care** for improving services and supports for LGBTQ children/youth in human service systems.

4. How to use a **practical strategic planning tool** provided during the session to implement more culturally and linguistically competent policies and practices.

5. The **experiences of other Institute participants** in providing supports to LGBTQ children and youth.

Our Agenda Today

**Part I, 1:30–3:15**
- Welcome and introductions
- Overview of strategic planning tool
- Discussion of your local needs and strategies
- Key terms, data, and concepts
- Exercises including self-assessment activity

**BREAK**

**Part II, 3:30–5:00**
- Practice standards and related strategies
- Strategic planning exercise
- Small- and large-group discussion, including local strategies
Our Challenge to You Today…

- Identify an area of interest to gather more information
- Identify one piece of information or practice to share with a colleague when I return to work
- Identify one strategy you will implement and develop in your own practice as a service provider

Discussion

- To what extent are you serving openly LGBT youth? How about youth with LGBT parents? Has this grown in recent years?

- What are your key interests/needs related to LGBT cultural competence?
Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Competent Care: Standards of Care for LGBT Youth

1. Organizational/individual assessment & continuous quality improvement
2. Nondiscrimination policies & practices
3. Staff knowledge
4. Forms, data collection, information sharing
5. Safe, supportive environments
6. Practices that affirm identity
7. Healthy, supportive peer connections
8. Family connections
9. Access to affirming services & supports
10. Community outreach & engagement
Discussion and Questions

• Which of these standards seem most relevant to your practice? How so?

• What related strategies are you addressing in your community/organization or individual practice?
### Strategic Planning Tool

- Write your organizational mission statement
- Write a vision statement for LGBT young people
- Identify local strengths/challenges
- Reflect on what you have written – based on this information, identify 1 or 2 strategies that you think:
  - Should align with your mission
  - Will be most useful to accomplishing your vision
  - Build on strengths
  - Respond to challenges

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies/Action Steps</th>
<th>Who should be involved?</th>
<th>Measures of Success</th>
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<td><strong>EXAMPLE</strong></td>
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<td>Standard 1: Self-Assessment and Ongoing Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Understand agency’s strengths, needs, and areas of improvement for providing supportive services for LGBT youth and their families</td>
<td><strong>Develop or find an evaluation tool</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Implement survey/tool with staff and children/youth accessing agency services</strong></td>
<td>Planning: Executive Director, Program Director&lt;br&gt;Survey: All staff and children/youth receiving agency services</td>
<td>• Data on organizational capacity and needs are available leading to implementation of new practices.</td>
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<td>Standard 1: Self-Assessment and Ongoing Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts</td>
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Your Perspectives

- When did you first have a “crush” on someone else?
- What does “sexual orientation” mean to you?
- What are your earliest memories of what it meant to be a boy or a girl?
- How important is your gender to you? In what ways? How do you express it?
Separate but Intersecting Identities: Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

**Biological**
- Sex
  - Chromosomes
  - Genitalia
  - Reproductive organs
  - Secondary sex characteristics

**Psycho-Social**
- Gender
  - Identity: Inner sense of being male/female/other
  - Expression: Communicating our gender to others (e.g., through behavior, appearance)
  - Attribution: What others see and respond to (i.e., what is on the outside)

**Sexual Orientation**
- Emotional, physical, romantic attraction to others

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**Rethinking Our Assumptions about Identity**

**Biological Sex:**
- Male
- Intersex
- Female

**Gender:**
- Man (masculine)
- Neutral
- Woman (feminine)

**Sexual Orientation:**
- Women
- Both
- Men
Transgender/Trans

- An umbrella term for someone whose gender identity/expression doesn’t fit social or cultural expectations for gender expression based on the person’s assigned sex at birth.
- This term should only be used with people who self-identify with the term. Different from that.
- A transgender person “transitions” to express gender identity through various changes (e.g., clothes).
- Some related terms: gender diverse, gender nonconforming, gender variant.
Coming Out

- The process of accepting one’s own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersex person—and the process of disclosing this to others.
- Is not the same for every person and is ongoing
- Is multidimensional: coming out to family, to peers, at school, at work, in one’s community
- Families come out too...

Heteronormativity

- The assumption — in individuals, systems, or organizations — that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is normal and superior to other sexual identities (e.g., gay, lesbian)
Heterosexism

- Prejudice against individuals and groups who express non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power.
- Any attitude, action, or practice backed by institutional power that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

Riddle Scale of Attitudes Toward LGBT Identity

- **Repulsion**: LGBT people are strange and aversive.
- **Pity**: LGBT people are somehow born that way and it is pitiful.
- **Tolerance**: Life for LGBT people is hard; anti-gay attitudes just make things worse.
- **Acceptance**: Lesbian and gay identity is a fact of life that should neither be punished nor celebrated.
- **Support**: The rights of LGBT people should be protected and safeguarded.
- **Admiration**: Being LGBT in our society takes strength.
- **Appreciation**: There is value in diversity. Anti-LGBT attitudes should be confronted.
- **Nurturance**: LGBT people are an indispensable part of society.
Internalized Stigma

• A sense of shame or self-hatred because of one’s attraction/identity

Microaggressions

• “Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward members of oppressed groups”

Discussion

- Share with your neighbor:
  - Have you experienced microaggressions? What kinds? When? How did you feel?
- Group discussion:
  - What types of microaggressions do you think LGBT individuals might experience?

Examples of LGBT Microaggressions

- Discomfort/disapproval of LGBT experience (e.g., showing public affection)
- Assuming all LGBT persons are the same
- Denying that heterosexism/transphobia exist—and denying our own biases
- Assuming sexual pathology/abnormality
- Expecting someone to not “act gay” in public

Source: Nadal (2013)
Ally

• A genuine, strong concern for the well-being of LGBT people
• Someone who confronts heterosexism, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexual privilege in themselves and others—and believes these are social justice issues
• Everyone can be an ally!
"Buzz" Activity

- Identify 3 important people in your life that you have spent time with recently
- Identify 3 places you typically go to on the weekend
- Identify 3 things you like to do during your non-work time

Experiences of LGBT Young People
Social Influences on Well-Being

Experiences such as chronic stress associated with…
- Peer rejection
- Bias and stigma
- Violence, including abuse and assault
- Loss of connection to culture/community
- Rejection from (or loss of) family and other adults

Lead to risky behaviors and negative outcomes such as…
- Substance abuse
- Disparities in quality of care
- Running away and homelessness
- Self-harm as well as suicide attempts/completion
- Entry into child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems
- School failure or poor school outcomes (e.g., attendance)
- Increased mental health challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression)

School Experiences That Contribute to Poor School Climate and Low Academic Achievement

- Lack of connection
- Danger
- Teasing, bullying, gangs
- Negative relationships with adults and peers
- Uncaring interactions
- Low expectations
- Academic disengagement
- Academic frustration
- Poor role models
- School-driven mobility
- Reactive punitive approaches to discipline
2011 GLSEN National School Climate Survey

• GLSEN survey of 8,584 students aged 13-20 found:
  – 71% reported hearing anti-LGBT remarks in their schools often or frequently—57% from school staff; most felt distressed by this
  – 64% felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation; 44% because of their gender expression

Source: http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/2897.html

• 82% of students reported being verbally harassed, 38% physically harassed (e.g., pushed, shoved), and 18% physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked) at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation

• 64% of students reported being verbally harassed, 27% physically harassed and 12% physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their gender expression

• How do you think this impacts school outcomes?
2011 GLSEN National School Climate Survey

- **30%** skipped a class at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable
  - **32%** missed at least one entire day of school in the past month

- Students experiencing higher levels of victimization because of their sexual orientation were **three times** as likely to have missed school in the past month than those who experienced lower levels (58% vs. 20%)

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2011 GLSEN National School Climate Survey

- Only about **a third** of LGBT students who reported incidents of victimization to school personnel said that staff effectively addressed the problem…

- When asked to describe how staff responded to reported incidents of victimization, students most commonly said that **staff did nothing**.
Compared with LGBT young people who were not rejected (or were only a little rejected) by their parents/caregivers because of their LGBT identity, highly rejected young people were how many times as likely to:

- Have attempted suicide? 8
- Report high levels of depression? 6
- Use illegal drugs? 3
- Be at risk for STDs? 3

Improved LGBT Youth Outcomes

Positive Outcomes:
Increased resilience
Improved school attendance
Reductions in bias and stigma
Peer support and healthy connections
Lower recidivism (or no system involvement)
Decreased homelessness and likelihood of running away
Increased support from families, other adults, and community
Fewer health, mental health, and substance abuse challenges

Decreased Stress and Improved Policy, Services, and Social Supports
School Experiences That Contribute to a Healthy School Climate and Academic Achievement

- Connection
- Safety
- Positive relationships with adults and peers
- Caring interactions
- Academic challenges
- Academic support
- Academic engagement
- Positive role modeling
- Social emotional learning
- Positive behavioral supports
- Access to needed services and supports

Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC): A Definition

- **Awareness** of cultural differences and interactions (e.g., attentiveness to stigma/bias)
- **Attitudes** (e.g., valuing diversity)
- **Commitment** to working effectively in different and diverse contexts and enhancing **equitable** access to **quality** services/care for all cultural groups
- **Capacity** (e.g., knowledge, skills, ability to self-assess, infusion of cultural understanding into an organization’s work)

How Is an Iceberg Like Culture and Identity?
Self-Assessment Activity and Discussion

PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY

Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports to LGBTQ Youth and Their Families

RATING SCALE: Please select A, B, or C for each item listed below:
- A = I do this frequently, or the statement applies to me to a great degree.
- B = I do this occasionally, or statement applies to me to a moderate degree.
- C = I do this rarely or never, or statement applies to me to a minimal degree or not at all.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MATERIALS, AND RESOURCES

1. I display pictures, posters and other materials that are inclusive of LGBTQ youth and their families served by my program/agency. □ A □ B □ C

2. I ensure that LGBTQ youth and families across diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups:
   • have access to magazines, brochures, and other printed materials □ A □ B □ C
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Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Competent Care: Standards of Care for LGBT Youth

1. Organizational/individual assessment & continuous quality improvement
2. Nondiscrimination policies & practices
3. Staff knowledge
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5. Safe, supportive environments
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7. Healthy, supportive peer connections
8. Family connections
9. Access to affirming services & supports
10. Community outreach & engagement
Standard 1: Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts

- Conduct a needs assessment or readiness survey to understand capacity of staff to provide culturally and linguistically competent services and supports to LGBT youth and their families.
- This assessment/survey should aim to determine staff strengths and needs related to their knowledge and skills.
- Don’t stop with the assessment….

Use the Assessment Data to Guide and Monitor Improvement Efforts…

- Monitor the effectiveness of implementation of services, supports, policies and procedures.
- Evaluate school progress toward its goals.
- Obtain feedback to institute appropriate changes to meet your goals on an ongoing basis.
- Infuse this process into other quality improvement efforts.
Sample Questions to Guide this Process

• How has your organization/system promoted and infused competence in serving and supporting LGBT youth and their families?
• What are your organization’s/system’s outcomes for LGBT students?
• What challenges has the organization/system encountered in meeting the needs of LGBT youth and their families?
• What action steps are necessary to address the issues identified?

Standard 2: Establish and Enforce Nondiscriminatory Policies

✓ Enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
✓ Prohibit all forms of harassment and discrimination
✓ Preclude contracting with service providers who discriminate or do not have policy protections
✓ Inform children/youth in care and the staff who serve them about formal grievance procedures
✓ Align process for addressing concerns with other discrimination/harassment procedures
Standard 3: Develop Your Knowledge and Skills

✓ Understand
- Differences between sex, sexual orientation, and gender; also, sexual and gender identity terms
- Myths, bias, and stereotypes—and how to address them
- Coming out process; how to support a young person in understanding their LGBT identity
- Experiences of LGBT young people and their families
- How to create an inclusive curriculum and classroom/school culture, including safe spaces
- Approaches to working with families of LGBT youth
- Local agency and community resources
- Significance of allies like you!

Standard 4: Use Inclusive Forms and Data Collection Processes

✓ Consent forms and screening procedures
  - Gender neutral language?
    - Preferred names?

✓ Confidentiality in data collection and information sharing
  ✓ Never intentionally “out” a young person unless required by law (e.g., safety or health risk to self or others)
Standard 5: Promote a Safe, Supportive and Culturally Competent Environment

✓ Create a safe space/zone…
  o Affirm all forms of diversity—and do not tolerate anti-LGBT bias/harassment
  o Ensure all staff can talk about sexual orientation and gender identity and address LGBT bias in a respectful way
  o Do not confuse sexual orientation with sexual behaviors
  o Display symbols and materials that positively represent the LGBT community
  o Do not refer to sexual orientation or gender identity/expression as ‘just a phase”

Safe Space Symbols
Standard 5: Promote a Safe, Supportive and Culturally Competent Environment

- Encourage youth to participate in identifying policies, procedures, and practices to improve school climate and clinical practice
- Be aware of challenges LGBT youth experience, but do not assume they are at risk—talk with them!
- Address misinformation too
- Deliver inclusive health education and resources
Discussion and Strategic Planning Exercise

Standard 6: Implement Practices that Support and Affirm Identity

- Effectively address stigma and bias
- Allow youth to express their authentic gender identity openly
- Refer to youth using their preferred pronouns and names (rather than legal names)
- Use inclusive language (e.g., “good morning everyone”)
Support Youth Who Are Gender Diverse

How You Can Address Bias Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity?

- Use gender neutral expectations for youth
- Establish a social culture that values diversity in all forms by fostering this social competence among students by proactively developing it
- Apply behavioral expectations fairly for all youth, regardless of one’s values/opinions about sexual orientation/gender expression
- Reinforce youth who are upstanders
Tips

• Be an upstander
• Teach youth how to be allies to address harassment/bullying:
  ▪ Talking with/befriending targeted youth
  ▪ Confiding in an adult
  ▪ Talking with youth showing problem behavior
  ▪ Creating a distraction to help stop harassment
  ▪ Speaking up in the moment
• Engage families

*from Welcoming Schools Project, HRC

Engage Teachable Moments

• Has anyone called you a name that made you feel bad? How did that make you feel?
• Why did you think it was okay to make fun of the way someone looks?
• Do you know what the word (offensive term) means?

*from Welcoming Schools Project, HRC
That was a stereotype. Stereotypes are a kind of lie and they hurt people’s feelings. Everybody is different with their own strengths and own way of being.

It’s unacceptable to say that to a classmate. All students are

It is not ok to call someone a “girl” to insult them. When you call someone a girl as a putdown, you are insulting ALL girls.

*from Welcoming Schools Project, HRC

**National Organizations to Support You**

- Advocates for Youth: [http://www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)
- All Children – All Families Project, Human Rights Campaign: [https://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/all-children-all-families](https://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/all-children-all-families)
- Findyouthinfo.gov: [http://findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth](http://findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth)
- Gender Spectrum: [www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)
National Organizations to Support You

• get R.E.A.L.: http://research.jacsw.uic.edu/getrealblog
• GSA Network: www.gsanetwork.org
• Safe Schools Coalition: www.safeschoolscoalition.org
• TA Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health, American Institutes for Research: http://tapartnership.org/COP/CLC/lgbtqi2s.php
• The Trevor Project: www.thetrevorproject.org
• Welcoming Schools Project at the Human Rights Campaign: www.welcomingschools.org

Standard 7: Promote Healthy Peer Connections

✓ Foster:
  ▪ Opportunities for LGBT youth in care to meet and support one another
  ▪ Mutual support
  ▪ Personal development
✓ Provide opportunities to access affirming recreational activities
✓ Support access to gay-straight alliances at school and similar community organizations
**Standard 8: Strengthen Family Connections with All Caregivers**

- Increase family (including resource family) knowledge about needs, interests, and perspectives of LGBT youth
- Help families understand how supportive and rejecting behaviors can affect their child/youth
- Provide families with respectful language to talk about sexual orientation and gender identity
- Decrease rejecting behavior; promote nonjudgmental attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate respect and concern
- Identify and engage affirming resource and foster families

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**Family Acceptance Project: Behaviors to Avoid**

- Pressuring their child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine
- Telling their child that they are ashamed of them or that how they look or act will shame the family
- Making their child keep their LGBT identity a secret in the family
- Blocking access to LGBT friends, events, and resources
- Blaming their child when they are discriminated against

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[http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_English%20Booklet_pst.pdf]
Family Acceptance Project: Behaviors That Help
http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_English%20Booklet_pst.pdf

- Talk with their child or foster child about their LGBT identity
- Express affection when their child tells them or when they learn that their child is gay or transgender
- Support their child’s LGBT identity even though they may feel uncomfortable
- Advocate for their child if they are mistreated because of their LGBT identity

Family Acceptance Project: Behaviors That Help
http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/files/FAP_English%20Booklet_pst.pdf

- Require that other family members respect their child
- Talk with clergy and help their faith community to support LGBT people
- Welcome their child’s LGBT friends and partners to their home
- Believe their child can have a happy future as an LGBT adult
U.S. Same-Sex Couples per 1,000 Households, by County

Source: http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/category/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/

Williams Institute Data on Percent of Same-Sex Couples Raising Children, by County

Source: http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/category/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/
Standard 9: Promote Access to Affirming Services

- Create collaborative partnerships and coordinate supports to increase the array and access to services needed to meet specific needs of youth:
  - Afterschool and employment skills/training
  - Primary care
  - Mental health and counseling
  - Family outreach
  - Housing

- Access national resources, such as the Trevor Project lifeline (866.488.7386), Trevorchat, Trevorspace, Ask Trevor

Standard 10: Community Outreach and Engagement

- Identify and distribute resource lists and community contacts for LGBT-affirming services and information

- Engage youth in conducting community outreach and promoting awareness of issues such as bullying, self and social acceptance, identity formation, depression, and suicide

- Collaborate and foster relationships with other organizations supporting these youth
Discussion and Strategic Planning Exercise

Back to the Objectives…

• Identify an area of interest to gather more information…
• Identify one piece of information or practice to share with a colleague when school begins…
• Identify one strategy you will implement and develop in your own practice…
Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC): A Definition

Combination of capacity (e.g., knowledge, skills), attitudes, and commitment to work effectively in different contexts and enhance equitable access to quality services/care for all cultural groups.

Please feel free to contact us!

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