Handouts for

"Going Beyond GSA's: Effective Counseling and
Advocacy for LGBTQ Students"

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Coming Out Model*: Stages and Strategies for Counselors

STAGE 1: Identity Confusion: "WHO AM I?"
Characterized by a conscious awareness that being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender has relevance to self and behavior: "If my behavior can be called gay, does this mean I am gay?"

Client Issues: fear, personal reality shock, denial, defensiveness, rationalizing

Therapeutic Strategies:
1. Explore sexual orientation
2. Offer support
3. Accept all of client's experiences and feelings as equally valid

STAGE 2: Identity Comparison "I DON'T BELONG!"
Characterized by comparing perceptions of self and behavior to the perceptions of others.

Client Issues: social reality shock, isolation, disorientation (loss of family structure), alienation, denial, confusion, depression/anger, guilt, shame, "passing", self-hate

Therapeutic Strategies:
1. Examine positive aspects of "differentness"
2. Explore internalized gender role socialization messages
      a. defining self in terms of others
      b. valuing masculine /feminine characteristics but viewing them as inappropriate for self
      c. viewing sexuality in terms of procreation or for pleasure
3. Assist client in redirecting anger outward
4. Avoid promoting premature labeling

Stage 3: Identity Tolerance "MAYBE I BELONG HERE"
Characterized by turning identity toward homosexualism or gender variance: "I probably am gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender"

Client Issues: stress, heightened alienation, acknowledgement of social, emotional, and sexual needs, guilt, acknowledgement of stigmatized identity, lack of social support, couples may deal with overloading

Therapeutic Strategies:
1**.** Refer to references on homosexuality: bookstores, hotlines, organizations, support groups, religious/spiritual groups, music and literature
2. Validate the normality of feeling "crazy" during this process.

* Cass, V. C. (1979). Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. *Journal of Homosexuality, 4,* 219-235.

STAGE 4: Identity Acceptance: "I DO BELONG HERE!"
Characterized by a feeling of belonging; identity questions such as "Who am I?" are resolved.

Client Issues: preparation to self-disclose identity (making decisions about who, when, where, and how much to disclose), social skill deficits, stress, work/career issues, couples may deal with different levels of coming out

Therapeutic Strategies:
1. Assess risks of coming out carefully with client, in terms of personal and economic loss
    a. **High level risks:** assist client in preparing for future. Discuss changes which decrease risk level, such as different career options, change in marital status, relocation. Provide educational and structured activities for client to share with family members.
    b. **Lower level risks:** client expresses a generalized fear of self-disclosure; assess the long term social and psychological consequences of remaining closeted (ex: lying, staying "on guard", "passing" guilt, stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse)
2. Examine internalized homophobic remarks in client. Decision to come out should be based on a position of strength and positive ideology.
3. Develop coming out strategies with client. Assign priorities to persons (low or high); stress importance of not coming out to all persons at the same time; examine expectations of client; use role-playing to practice; stress a non-defensive posture for educating significant others.
4. Prepare clients for stressful aspects of self-disclosure.

STAGE 5: Identity Pride: "THESE ARE MY PEOPLE"
Characterized by preferring a homosexual identity; rejecting values classified as heterosexual; chooses a disclosure as a strategy for coping.

Client Issues: anger, loss of individual identity, high conformity to LGBT community standards, self-disclosure, work/career issues. Couples: monogamy/non-monogamy, money, autonomy, commitment, decision-making, parenting.

Therapeutic Strategies:
1. Propose non-concealment rather than self-disclosure in high-risk areas (custody, employment)
2. Encourage political activism as a productive means of focusing anger
3. Develop strategies for daily interactions
4. Assist client in developing realistic expectations and attitudes regarding the community
5. Help client work through consequences of disclosure.

STAGE 6: Identity Synthesis: "WE"RE ALL MORE SIMILAR THAN DIFFERENT"
Client Issues: less intense anger, integration vs. separation, self-disclosure, stress
Therapeutic Strategies:
1. Assist client in developing strategies to cope with stressors of everyday living
2. Continue to evaluate risks and possible outcomes of disclosure in new situations
3. Explore client's ability to integrate LGBT identity as one aspect of self
4. Assist client in developing strategies to manage anger effectively

Drop In Centers for LGBTQ+ youth (Youth Outlook) www.youth-outlook.org

(All Drop In Centers open from 6:30-9p)

DeKalb- Mondays
1st Congregational Church
615 N. 1st St.
DeKalb, IL 60115

Naperville- Tuesdays
First Congregational Church
25 E. Benton
Naperville, IL 60540

Transcend- Wednesdays (specifically for transgender and gender expansive youth)
DuPage Unitarian
1828 Old Naperville Rd.
Naperville, IL 60563

Aurora- Thursdays
New England Congregational Church
406 W. Galena Blvd,
Aurora, IL 60506

Sterling- Thursdays
First Presbyterian Church
410 2nd Ave
Sterling, IL 61081

Youth Outlook 2 (for LGBTQ+ people ages 21-25)-
1st and 3rd Thursday of the month
DuPage Unitarian
1828 Old Naperville Rd.
Naperville, IL 60563

Parent Group
2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month (6-8p)
Wesley United Methodist
21 E Franklin St.
Naperville, IL 60540

Email info@youth-outlook.org for more details!

The Genderbread Person v3.3

by *it's pronounced* METROsexual.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.

Expression

Identity

Attraction

Sex

⊘ Indicates a lack of what's on the right.

Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread

4 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos.

Gender Identity

How you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.

⊘

Woman-ness

Man-ness

"two-spirit"   "woman"

"genderqueer"   "man"

Gender Expression

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.

⊘

Feminine

Masculine

"androgynous"   "butch"

"gender neutral"   "femme"

Biological Sex

The physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.

⊘

Female-ness

Male-ness

"intersex"   "male"

"female"   "MtF Female"

Sexually Attracted to

Nobody
⊘

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

Romantically Attracted to

Nobody
⊘

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction

LGBT Inclusive School Checklist

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

❑ Fairly enforced non-discrimination and anti-bullying/harassment policies that explicitly protect LGBT students

❑ School forms and applications that are inclusive of all identities and family structures

❑ A gender-neutral dress code, including for yearbook photos

❑ Gender-neutral and/or private bathrooms and changing areas

SCHOOL EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS

❑ School dances and proms that are safe for and inclusive of LGBT students

❑ Proms, homecoming and athletic events that allow for gender-neutral alternatives to "King" and "Queen"

❑ Valentine's Day celebrations inclusive of LGBT and non-coupled students

❑ Observations of Mother's Day and Father's Day that affirm all family structures

COURSE CONTENT

❑ Health and sexuality education that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities

❑ Curriculum that regularly includes information about LGBT people, history and events

❑ Library resources and displays that are inclusive of LGBT people, history and issues

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

❑ Athletic teams and events that are safe for and inclusive of LGBT students

❑ GSA's and other student clubs that combat name-calling, bullying and harassment

❑ School publications that cover LGBT people and issues

Once you have assessed your school's policies and practices, you should decide which areas of your school need the most work. Collaborate with other educators and administrators to implement realistic changes within the school.

What Can I Say to Make an Impact with My Principal or Administrator?

Adapted from p. 31 of GLSEN's Safe Space Kit. Download for free at www.GLSEN.org.

▼ **Be direct.** Let them know exactly what you're there for. "I'm here today to talk to you about the need to make our school a safe space for all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression." Let them know that you are an ally to LGBT students, and there are some changes that can be made in the school to help LGBT students feel included and safe.

▼ **Show them why the change is necessary.** "I think there is a need for a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy (or a training for all staff, a change in the Internet filter software, etc.) in this school because…" Use statistics from GLSEN's National School Climate Survey or results from your school's climate survey to inform your principal or administrator about the prevalence of anti-LGBT behavior in schools and its effects on LGBT students. If possible, use statistics from a GLSEN Research Brief for your specific state (see **www.glsen.org/research**) or a local school climate survey you have conducted in your school. Give them brief descriptions of the anti-LGBT behavior you have personally witnessed in the school.

▼ **Put the focus on safety.** All school administrators have a responsibility to make sure their schools are safe (physically and emotionally) for the students who attend them. "As you can see from these statistics (or incidents, stories, etc.) the climate in the school is having an effect on the comfort, safety, and sense of belonging of many of the students as well as test scores, attendence and grades." Point out to them the negative effects anti-LGBT behavior has not only on LGBT students, but all students.

▼ **Show them how the school community will benefit from the change.** "These actions will help make our school a safer and friendlier place for all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression." Provide information on how this change can results in a more positive school climate and improve student achievement. For example, share research from GLSEN's National School Climate Survey about the benefits of having supportive school staff or a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy.

▼ **Give an overview of how educators can be allies to LGBT students and the changes the school can make.** Briefly share with them specific ways educators can be a supportive ally to LGBT students, such as intervening when anti- LGBT behavior occurs, not assuming the sexual orientation or gender identity of their students (or their parents) and including LGBT people, history and events in their curriculum. Briefly share with them the specific changes that will make your school safer. Use concrete examples like starting a GSA or making the school's anti-bullying policies inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

▼ **Leave information and schedule a follow-up meeting.** Photocopy or print key information from the *Guide to Being an Ally* and leave copies with your principal or administrator. Leave the information that you think will get them to support your efforts. If possible, try and secure some future time to further discuss the issue. Give the principal or administrator time to learn more and digest the information before continuing the discussion.

ASCA Position Statement - The Professional School Counselor and LGBTQ Youth
(Adopted 1995, Revised 2000, 2005, 2007, 2013, 2014)

Professional school counselors promote equal opportunity and respect for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Professional school counselors work to eliminate barriers that impede student development and achievement and are committed to the academic, personal/social and career development of all students.

The Rationale
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth often experience challenges to their academic and personal/social development related to a negative school climate. Students report feeling unsafe in school due to their sexual orientation, perceived orientation, gender identity or gender expression and report experiencing homophobic remarks, harassment and bullying (GLSEN, 2011). LGBTQ individuals often face multiple risk factors that may place them at greater risk for suicidal behavior (SPRC, 2008). Professional school counselors realize these issues impact healthy student development and psychological well-being.

The Professional School Counselor's Role
The professional school counselor works with all students through the stages of identity development and understands this may be more difficult for LGBTQ youth. It is not the role of the professional school counselor to attempt to change a student's sexual orientation or gender identity. Professional school counselors do not support efforts by licensed mental health professionals to change a student's sexual orientation or gender as these practices have been proven ineffective and harmful (APA, 2009). School counselors provide support to LGBTQ students to promote academic achievement and personal/social development. Professional school counselors are committed to the affirmation of all youth regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression and work to create safe and affirming schools. School counselors:
• assist students with feelings about their sexual orientation and gender identity as well as the identity of others in an accepting and nonjudgmental manner

• advocate for equitable educational and extracurricular opportunities for all students regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression

• promote policies that denounce the use of offensive language, harassment, and bullying that lead to a hostile school environment

• address absenteeism, lowered educational aspirations and academic achievement, and low psychological wellbeing as a result of victimization and feeling unsafe at school (GLSEN, 2012)

• provide a safe space for LGBTQ students and allies such as Gay and Straight Alliance Clubs

• promote sensitivity and acceptance of diversity among all students and staff to include LGBTQ students and diverse family systems

• advocate for the rights of families to access and participate in their student's education and school activities without discrimination (GLSEN, 2001)

• support an inclusive curriculum at all grade levels

• model language that is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity

• advocate for adoption of school policies that address discrimination and promote safe and supportive school environments (Robinson & Espelage, 2012)

• promote violence-prevention programs to create a safe school environment

• encourage staff training on inclusive practices, creating an affirming school environment, accurate information and risk factors for LGBTQ students (Russell, et.al. 2010)

• identify LGBTQ community resources for students and families