Improving Emotional and Behavioral Outcomes for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth in Kentucky

Christopher Duckworth, MPH
Kentucky Initiative for Collaborative Change
TRC/ Eastern Kentucky University
521 Lancaster, Mattox 229
Richmond, KY 40475
(859) 622-7284
Christopher.Duckworth@eku.edu

System of Care Academy
Lexington, KY
June 26, 2014
Acknowledgements

- The Kentucky Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KY DBHDID) Workgroup to Eliminate Heath Disparities for Individuals who are LGBTQI2-S and Their Families.
- SAMHSA National Workgroup to Address the Needs of Children and Youth Who Are LGBTQI2-S and Their Families.
Definitions and Key Terms

▶ LGBTQI2-S?

- **Lesbian** - a woman who is physically, mentally, or emotionally attracted to other women

- **Gay** – a man or woman who is physically, mentally, or emotionally attracted to the same gender; this term is either used to only identify men or all sexual minority individuals

- **Bisexual** – a man or woman who is physically, mentally, or emotionally attracted to both genders

- **Transgender** – an umbrella term used to describe a person whose self-identity as male or female differs from their anatomical sex determination at birth
Definitions and Key Terms

LGBTQI2-S?

- **Questioning** – a person, often an adolescent, who has questions about their sexual orientation or gender identity and does not necessarily identify as gay.

- **Intersex** – people born with an indeterminate sexual anatomy or developmental hormone pattern/chromosome pattern that is neither exclusively male nor exclusively female; the conditions that cause these variations are sometimes grouped under the terms “intersex” or “DSD” (Differences of Sex Development).

- **Two-Spirit** – a contemporary term used to describe North American Aboriginal People who possess the sacred gifts of the female-male spirit.
  - Two-spirit people were respected, contributing members of traditional Aboriginal societies; today, Aboriginal people who are two-spirit may also identify as being LGBT.
What is an ALLY?

- An ally is an individual who speaks out and stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against.

- An ally works to end oppression by supporting and advocating for people who are stigmatized, discriminated against or treated unfairly.
What is Sexual Identity?

- Sexual identity refers to how you see yourself as a sexual being and how you express yourself to other persons in your life.
- Sexual identity is *not* the same as gender identity.
- Sexual identity includes your sexual orientation or how you label yourself regarding the gender or genders of those with whom you form romantic/sexual relationships.
- It is *not* behavior alone; identity doesn’t always match behavior.
Importance of Healthy Sexual Identity Development

- Identity development is a critical task of adolescence
- Unhealthy identity formation is associated with developmental problems
- Better sexual identity integration is associated with better outcomes:
  - Lower depression
  - Lower anxiety
  - Fewer behavior problems
  - Higher self-esteem
  - Less substance abuse
Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation

**Biological**
- SEX
  - CHROMOSOMES
  - GENITALIA
  - REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS
  - SECONDARY SEX CHARACTERISTICS

**Psycho-Social**
- GENDER
  - IDENTITY: SELF-CONCEPT AS MALE/FEMALE/OTHER
  - EXPRESSION: COMMUNICATING YOUR GENDER TO OTHERS
  - ATTRIBUTION: WHAT OTHERS SEE AND RESPOND TO

**Sexual Orientation**
- EROTIC & EMOTIONAL ATTRACTION TO OTHERS

Biological and Psycho-Social
Percent of Same-Sex Couples Raising Children, by County

Proportions of same-sex couples raising children by county (adjusted)

Proportions of same-sex couples by sex and child-rearing status
Kentucky Same-Sex Couples

Same-sex couples per 1,000 households
by census tract (adjusted)

- 0 - 6.2
- 6.3 - 7.5
- 7.6 - 9.8
- 9.9 and above

Same-sex couples: 11,572
Same-sex couples per 1,000 households: 6.7
Kentucky Same-Sex Couples Raising Children

Percent of same-sex couples raising children by county (adjusted)

- 0% - 28%
- 29% - 33%
- 34% - 38%
- 39% and above

Proportions of same-sex couples by sex and child-rearing (adjusted)

- Raising children: 24%
  - 2,768
- Not raising children: 76%
  - 8,804
How Many LGBTQ Youth?

Statistics from multiple studies show that 4.5% of youth identify as LGBT in high school and an additional 4.5% identify as Questioning.

So, we’re looking at about 9% (this number may be low due to issues with self reporting).

Source: Youth Suicide Prevention Program (2014) http://www.yspp.org/about_suicide/gay_lesbian_FAQs.htm
“Coming Out”

- “Coming out” is the process of revealing one’s sexual orientation to others.
  - Family Acceptance Project found that adolescents self-identified as LGB, on average, at age 13.4.

- It is possible to have emotional and romantic attractions without being sexually active.

“My son is a gift. My role as a parent has been to give him space to unfold – just as he is – into a happy, caring young gay man. I’ve learned so much from him. He’s helped me grow as a parent and as a person.”

Hugo, father of 14-year old gay youth

Gender

- Practitioners who work with transgender and gender non-conforming children and youth note that gender identity is expressed at early ages (Brill & Pepper, 2008), most often by age 3 (Leibowitz & Spack, 2011).

- It is possible to have emotional and romantic attractions without being sexually active.

“When my daughter was little I spent so much time fussing over how she looked. I should have been concerned about how she felt. We didn’t know about transgender – but I know how sad and depressed she got right before middle school. The school helped us find a counselor and that’s when we found out how hopeless she felt. I wanted to make sure she wasn’t rejected by others, but instead, I was the one who was rejecting her. I’m so grateful I could change things before it was too late.”

Brianna, mother of 12-year old transgender youth

Self Assessment Exercise

- Take a moment to complete the “Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports to LGBTQ Youth and Their Families”

Self Assessment Exercise

- After Completing the Assessment, talk with others at your table.

- What are the areas of strength?
- What challenges?
- What personal bias may be at play?

Project SPEAK Out

- http://lexfair.org/index.php/project-speak-out
LBGT Youth Experience and Risk in Kentucky

- 2011 GLSEN School Climate Survey
- 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Results
Importance of Family Acceptance

- Compared to peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection – LGBT young adults who reported high levels of family 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

Importance of Family Acceptance

- Family acceptance helps:
  - Protect against depression, suicidal behavior, and substance abuse
  - Promote self-esteem, social support, and overall health

“When I put my head on the pillow at night, I think about my daughter and just hope she’s safe. I don’t know where she is. I haven’t heard from her since I threw her out of the house when she told me she was lesbian. I didn’t know what to do. I wish I had acted differently. I would give anything to be able to change that now.”

Monica, mother of 16-year old lesbian youth

Working with Families

- Engage, approach, and connect with families and caregivers by meeting them “where they are,” and view each family as an ally.
- Let parents and caregivers tell their story.
- Give families respectful language to talk about sexual orientation and gender identity.

Working with Families

► Educate families on how family rejecting behaviors affect their LGBT child.
► Educate families on how supportive and accepting behaviors affect their LGBT child.
► Families that don’t accept their children’s sexual orientation or gender identity can still support their LGBT children and decrease rejecting behaviors to protect them by harm.
► A little change makes a difference!!

“I didn’t understand how hurtful it was to tell my son that being bisexual was just a fad. I pushed him away when he was trying to share an important part of himself with me. I didn’t understand about sexual orientation – I thought I could pressure him to be straight. But instead, I made him think I was rejecting him. I’ve spent a lot of time listening to him now – and learning.”

Ben, father of 14-year old bisexual youth

Standards of Care

1) Assessment and CQI
2) Nondiscrimination Policies
3) Staff Knowledge and Development
4) Documentation, Data Collection and Information Sharing
5) Safe and Supportive Environments

Standards of Care

6) Practices that Affirm Identity
7) Healthy and Supportive Peer Connections
8) Family Connections
9) Access to Affirming Services and Supports
10) Community Outreach and Engagement

Resources

Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health

http://tapartnership.org/COP/CLC/lgbtqi2s.php
http://lgbtqi2stoolkit.org

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQI2-S) Learning Community (LC) provides a forum for Systems of Care and their partners to collaborate, exchange knowledge, network and share best practices to advance the development of culturally and linguistically competent mental health systems for children and youth who are LGBTQI2-S and their families. This learning community will share information on children and adolescents with same-sex and (or) LGBTQI2-S parents/caregivers. The LGBTQI2-S Learning Community will collaborate with the Child, Adolescent and Family Branch’s National Workgroup to Address the Needs of Youth Who Are LGBTQI2-S; national organizations; and other individuals with expertise in enhancing community knowledge and providing appropriate services and supports.
Improving Emotional & Behavioral Outcomes for LGBT Youth: A Guide for Professionals

Topics Include:
- Providing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Services and Supports
- Conducting CLC self assessment
- LGBT Youth in Out of Home Care
- Building Resilience
- Safe environments for LGBT youth
- Standards of Care

Includes internet resources

Paul H Brookes Publishing
Providing Services and Supports for Youth Who Are LGBTQI2-S: A Practice Brief

- Presents recommendations and strategies across six areas (which are applicable to settings serving and supporting youth):
  - Creating a welcoming environment
  - Protecting youth
  - Strengthening staff and supports
  - Supporting youth who are transgender
  - Enhancing practice and service delivery
  - Engaging communities

- Includes internet resources

- Available online at: http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/lgbtqi2s.pdf
Helping Families Support Their LGBT Children

- Developed for families, caretakers, advocates, and providers
- Provides basic information to help families support their LGBT children
- Provides data demonstrating that higher family acceptance leads to reduced risk

Available online at:
http://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/LGBT_Brief.pdf
Resources

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWbTk-Bblk8&feature=plcp
Resources

http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/about/index.html
LYG boosts the self-esteem of GLBT youth by providing a safe space that encourages positive life choices, teaches healthy interactions with peers and adults, and develops activities in which youth are challenged to reach their full potential. We envision a universal community that accepts, affirms and uplifts all young people, no matter what their identity.
Questions and Discussion