ENSURING THE SAFETY, PERMANENCY AND WELL-BEING OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUESTIONING (LGBTQ) YOUTH IN CARE OF CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

California Administration of the Courts
UC Davis June 11, 2014
Fresno June 18, 2014

Training Objectives

• Approach the topic of LGBTQ youth in child welfare systems with cultural humility
• Learn about the concepts and terminology related to SOGIE, and examine common myths
• Increase understanding of the legal and professional standards governing child welfare services to LGBTQ youth
• Examine the objectives of safety, permanency and well-being as they apply to LGBTQ youth
Cultural Humility Embraces:

- a willingness to openly assess oneself
- acceptance of one’s limitations
- acknowledging gaps in one’s knowledge
- openness to new & contradictory ideas

Cultural Humility Involves:

a) A lifelong process
b) Serious self-reflection and self-critique
c) A commitment to respecting different viewpoints
e) Engaging with others from a place of learning
f) An attitude that acknowledges that culture is individual & can only be understood individually
Culturally Humble Practice:

“Those who practice cultural humility work to increase self-awareness of their own biases and perceptions and engage in a life-long process of self reflection about how to put these aside and learn from clients.”

(Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998)
RE-TEACHING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

THE SPECTRUM

Our sexuality and gender identity aren’t set in stone. In fact, people’s identities can be fluid. THE SPECTRUM can help you visualize how you feel of any given time. Mark how you identify today on each line, but don’t feel limited. It’s ok to mark something different tomorrow!

BIOLOGICAL SEX
(What the doctor assigned you at birth)

MALE
FEMALE

GENDER IDENTITY
(How you feel on the inside)

MAN
WOMAN
TRANSCENDENTAL
IDENTITY
IDENTITY

GENDER EXPRESSION
(How you present yourself to others)

MASCULINE
FEMININE

GENDER PRESENTATION
(How the world sees you)

MAN
WOMAN
GENDERQUEER/GENDERFLUID

SEXUAL ORIENTATION
(Who you like)

ATTRACTION TO WOMEN
ATTRACTION TO MEN
BISSEXUAL/BISEXUAL
GAY/SIMULATIVE
LESBIAN/SIMULATIVE
HETEROSEXUAL

Sexuality Terminology

The Youth Perspective

Mrs. Madrigal, “You don’t have to keep up dear, you just have to keep open.”
Context and intent:

A father is asked, “Have you ever set your son on fire? He responds, “Yeah, a few times. He loved it.”

Huh?

Digital Stories:

• Captain
Laws in California

AB 458
Foster Care Nondiscrimination Act

- The right to fair and equal access to services, placement, care, treatment and benefits
- The right to NOT to be subjected to discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived SO/GI
California Student Safety & Violence Prevention Act
AB 537

• Protects students and employees in California public schools against discrimination or harassment based on
  – Sexual orientation
  – Gender identity
  – Gender nonconforming appearance or behavior
The School Success and Opportunity Act
AB 1266

• Requires schools to permit students to participate in sex-segregated programs, activities and facilities *consistent with their gender identity* regardless of the gender listed in their school records.

LGBT Competency Training
AB 868

• Requires the California Judicial Council to include *cultural competency and sensitivity relating to, and best practices for, providing adequate care to LGBT youth* in training of:
  – Family law judges and bench officers
  – Dependency court judges and bench officers
  – Dependency attorneys for children
  – CASAs
Core Objectives

• Safety
• Permanency
• Well-being

Ensuring the Safety of LGBTQ Youth in Care

• What makes someone feel safe?
• What are some safety concerns for LGBTQ youth in care?
• What can child welfare practitioners do to ensure the safety of LGBTQ youth in care?
Street Child by Justin Reed Early

San Diego Study

Child Welfare Journal Article

National Alliance to End Homelessness Best Practice Guide

Digital Stories:

- George
- Darryn
What does it feel like to have a secret?

Ensuring Permanency for LGBTQ Youth in Care

• What do we mean by “permanency?”
• What role can child welfare practitioners play in ensuring permanency for LGBTQ youth?
Permanency

• Engage families to increase acceptance
• Decrease reliance on group care
• Work with youth to identify permanent connections
• Increase and diversify LGBT affirming placements
• Train and support caregivers

Always My Son
Foster Parent Survey

1. Would you be willing to care for an LGBTQ youth?
2. Have you ever attended a training about LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care?
3. If yes, do you feel as though you have sufficient information to be able to provide a safe and stable home for LGBTQ youth?
4. Would you be willing to attend training (or additional training) on the needs of LGBTQ youth?
5. Are you currently aware of, or connected to, supportive services for LGBTQ Youth?
6. What types of support do you think you would need in order to care for LGBTQ youth?

ENSURING WELL-BEING OF LGBTQ YOUTH
HOME, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY
Family Acceptance Project:

- Extremely Accepting: 92%
- Very Accepting: 77%
- A Little Accepting: 59%
- Not At All Accepting: 35%

Family Acceptance Project: Optimism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Acceptance</th>
<th>See a Future as a Happy LGBT Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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Lifetime Suicide Attempts

Low Rejecting Family

Moderately Rejecting Family

Severely Rejecting Family

(Family Acceptance Project 2009)

Behaviors that help

- Talk with your child about their SO/GI
- Advocate for your child when he or she is mistreated
- Express affection when you learn your child is LGBT
- Require that family members respect your child

Behaviors to avoid

- Pressuring your child to be more of less feminine or masculine
- Telling your child that God will punish them
- Blaming your child when they are mistreated
- Making your child keep their LGBT identity a secret
### School

**Risk Factors**
- School-based victimization increases risk
  - Truancy
  - School failure
  - Depression
  - Low self esteem
  - Lack of positive peer connections

**Protective Factors**
- Safe and affirming schools increase well-being
  - School engagement
  - Academic success
  - Positive peer relations
  - Hope for the future

### Community

**Risk Factors**
- Isolation
- Rejecting faith community
- Biased politicians and laws
- Anti-LGBT violence or harassment
- Lack of LGBT affirming space
- Lack of local role models

**Protective Factors**
- Anti-discrimination laws and policies
- Openly LGBT community leaders
- Affirming congregations
- LGBT Community Center
- Pride events
- Public protest against anti-LGBT incidents
“When you learn to love yourself you will dissolve all the stones that are cast.”

~Indigo Girls

TYLER/BERDIE
Q & A
WRAP-UP

ROB WORONOFF, MS
CHILD WELFARE CONSULTANT
202.607.0615
ROBWORONOFF@HOTMAIL.COM
WWW.ROBWORONOFF.COM

SHANNAN WILBER
YOUTH POLICY DIRECTOR
NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS
415.365.1331
SWILBER@NCLIGHTS.ORG
WWW.NCLIGHTS.ORG