

ALGBTIC NEWS

Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling

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Pre-Conference 2012

A Division of the American Counseling Association

Message from the President Amney Harper, Ph.D.



Hello ALGBTIC Family!

There is so much going on as I sit to write this message to you all. We have been diligently preparing and planning for our many ALGBTIC events at this year's ACA Annual Conference in San Francisco. In this issue of the newsletter you can find details about our upcoming events. I am excited about some things that will be a little bit different this year. First, at last year's Queer People of Color (QPOC) Gathering there was a lot of energy, and participants expressed the desire to expand the time allotted. Therefore, this year we are excited to have two hours for this important meeting. The QPOC meeting has continued to gain momentum since its beginning, and I am excited to see where it will go next. Also this year, some of our ALGBTIC leaders (board members and committee co-chairs) have become involved in a collaborative group comprised of members of various LGBT organizations in the mental health profession. One of the organizations that

are involved in this effort, GAYLESTA, is located in San Francisco. We have invited GAYLESTA to join us at our happy hour and reception this year. We are excited to welcome them to our events and look forward to the opportunity to continue to build on our collaborative efforts. Additionally, this year on Thursday of the conference, we will offer a free SAFE Zone training for interested ACA members. There are more details in this newsletter, so if you are interested, you will find information in this issue about signing up (Space is limited, so act quickly). This SAFE Zone training is one part of my presidential initiatives this year and is being conducted by the Safe Schools Taskforce with the help of the National GSA Network. It is a wonderful opportunity for those who are interested in becoming SAFE Zone trained.

In the midst of the flurry for preparations for the conference, there have also been some concerning changes occurring in ACA. At the last Governing Council Meeting, there was a proposal for significant restructuring

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of the Governing Council structure. What has been proposed would effectively end division and regional representation and replace it with a Board of Directors of 13 voting members and 3 non-voting members. This is concerning for a number of reasons, but specifically because this type of centralization of power will eliminate the assurance of representation of marginalized and oppressed groups. Under our current structure, ALGBTIC has a guaranteed place at the table, and therefore, LGBT issues in counseling have a voice. With the proposed structure, there are no guarantees that the elected Directors would be diverse or hold the social justice values that have become such an important part of our work as mental health professionals and educators. This will not only affect LGBT issues and concerns, but will impact those of every marginalized or oppressed identity. It is grave to consider what such a huge step backwards might mean for our profession, our identity, and the work we do with students and clients. It is important for ALGBTIC members to speak up and voice your concerns and opinions about this process. Please take the time to share your thoughts with all of your representatives (especially if you are a member of multiple divisions). If you are at the ACA Convention early, you can also sit in on the Governing Council meeting. ALGBTIC has been working in conjunction with CSJ, AMCD, and other divisions to assert our concerns about these issues

issues in a formal statement. Additionally, our own Governing Council Representative, Joy Whitman, is actively engaged in raising concerns about this issue. This is the time, however, for each of us to stand up and make our voices heard.

In the wake of all of these events, I have been reflecting greatly on my role as ALGBTIC President and what it means to be a leader in this division. I know at times in our work together we do not always have the same opinions, values, and beliefs. A recent discussion on the CSJ Listserv (where some leaders in the division were criticized about their approach to responding to the restructuring of Governing Council bylaws changes) really got me thinking about how we disagree. I believe this issue (as with all social justice issues) is very important, but I also believe how we are working towards these goals is crucial. My belief is that the best advocacy work is relational. This doesn't mean we don't critically examine what we do, hold one another responsible, or that we shouldn't disagree. In fact, those things are what make our relationship real and honest. However, it is important to do so in ways that do not merely achieve our end goal of promoting a particular position, but seek to make our relationships stronger collectively through the process. As a counselor first, and then counselor educator, by training I am deeply invested in what transpires between us, our connect-

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to one another, and how we work through conflict. I believe wholeheartedly in advocating for and with those who are marginalized or oppressed. I also believe in advocating in ways that model the values of caring, respect, and compassion. Where possible, the best advocacy promotes dignity and respect and preserves relationship. In the Social and Cultural Foundations course I teach, the students have a semester long project called "Little Acts of Advocacy". The assignment helps students to recognize when they already advocate, increase the amount of advocacy they do, become intentional in their process, and learn to be more effective advocates. The piece that we process consistently related to efficacy is how to advocate from the heart. I believe strongly that when we first connect to those who we would have heard our concerns, it is more effective. While there are certainly times for shouting and kicking down the back door to achieve our goals, there are many other strategies to achieve our advocacy goals that are relational. I don't believe in watering things down or candy coating our criticisms, but to share honest concerns with compassion for the receiver. The discussion on the CSJ listserv reminded me about my strong values related to advocacy, and I wanted to share my thoughts with you all.

I also am writing about this to you because while I encouraged you, was members to speak out about the bylaws changed being voted on by the Governing council in the

next meeting, I also encourage you to take a moment to support the leaders who have fought for these concerns or others or perhaps who you believe have worked hard to be good leaders (within divisions, the larger ACA structure, committees, taskforces, etc.). Having spent the last three years in leadership roles within ALGBTIC, including this year as President, I know firsthand what type of dedication, commitment, and service is required to work towards positive changes. I know that my own leadership has not been perfect. I have learned a lot along the way, which means I have not always known the correct path to travel or how to best address an important issue. I know the countless hours that leaders put forth to do this important work. I am honored to be a part of the ALGBTIC family, and I appreciate the ways in which we stand together in relationship. I encourage you to reach out to leaders who have impacted you because these moments that we share with one another along the road are just as important if not more as where we end up.

In this spirit, I just want to take a moment to welcome the new leaders who will be joining us this coming July: newly elected President-Elect-Elect, Hugh Crethar, ALGBTIC Governing Council Representative, Joy Whitman (Thank you for serving an additional term, Joy! You have represented us well.), and ALGBTIC Board

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Membership Committee

Rhodes Gibson, **Webmaster**

Samuel Sanbria & Tara Hill, **State Branch Chapter Committee**

Amney Harper & Pete Finnerty, **LGB Competencies Task Force**

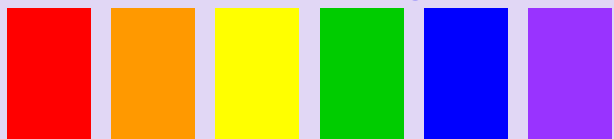
Kristopher Goodrich, Melissa Luke & Anneliese Singh, **Safe Schools Task Force**

Pia Smal & Charles Lenahan, **Technology and Resources Committee**

Kris Goodrich & Joel Filmore, **LGBTQQIA Affirmative Counseling & Social Justice Task Force**

Sean Moundas & Stacey Reicherzer, **Transgender Committee**

**Association for Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual & Transgender Issues in
Counseling**



Trustee, Tonya Hammer. I congratulate you on being elected to your respective positions, and I also want to take this time to thank you for the service and commitment you are agreeing to provide to ALGBTIC members. Your service is invaluable. I also am excited to see what direction our current President Elect, Pete Finnerty, will take us in the coming year. July is just around the corner, and Pete will soon be taking the reins. I have worked closely with Pete over the last three years in a number of capacities, and I am excited and hopeful about what his year will bring. I hope you will all take a moment to get to know your future leaders in San Francisco if you are able to attend. I hope to see you there!

In Solidarity,
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Spring is just around the corner!!!



Great conference, great city, great time of the year! More information on ALGBTIC Events can be found within this edition of the newsletter!

SAN FRANCISCO
ACA 2012
Conference & Exposition
March 21—25, 2012

“Coming Out” from American Culture’s Dichotomous Thinking

**By Claire Postl, Doctoral Candidate &
Courtney Holmes, Ph.D.
Bowling Green State University**

Literature points to the coming out process as one that promotes personal growth and supports sexual minorities in creating an integrated identity (Vaughan & Waehler, 2010). Commonly, coming out is defined as stating or verbalizing your sexual orientation- to family, friends, co-workers, or others. While interning at a university counseling center and participating in LGBT activities on campus, I have heard many different student accounts of how they have come out to friends and family, or how they intend to do so. Over time, I have seen a trend in more students not wanting to make a formal coming out statement, but rather deciding to take action by bringing a girlfriend or boyfriend home to meet their family. I began to wonder about the different choices people make about identifying themselves to others – implicit vs. explicit, over time vs. immediate disclosure. Not in the sense of why someone would come out – but just the contrary - why does society have a desire to *know* one’s sexual orientation – why must we be obsessed with labeling in order to feel comfortable? Over time, I have thought about what coming out means from a cultural perspective and how our societal views on labels and “knowing” something influence our perceptions of the coming out process.

The purpose of this brief article is to discuss the significance of coming out, question how implicit coming out could have an effect on one’s sense of self

and empowerment, and challenge readers to begin to call into question the cultural norms of labels, dichotomies, and social boxes that limit human potential and identity.

The process of “coming out” is unique; one in which an individual puts all cards on the table for someone else to take or leave, accept or reject. For some, coming out is a great gesture that includes a formal speech that has been practiced countless times in front of the mirror; while for others, coming out consists of subtle implicit hints over time, in hopes that their recipients begin to understand (Chirrey, 2003). "Schope (2002) identified coming out as being part of the sexual identity process; a person may be better able to open up about his or her sexual orientation after acceptance of self and embracing one's own sexuality." Research has shown “coming out” and being “out” can have a great impact on an individual’s feelings of self-esteem and self-identity. Jordan and Deluty (2000) found that lesbians who were “out” felt more empowered, and reported having healthier relationship because of it. Coming out can symbolize a new stage in one’s own sexual identity development and a new personal acceptance and confidence. Rasmussen (2004) found similar research that promoted coming out as providing a sense of empowerment and commitment to one’s own sexual identity. With a number of different studies reporting the benefit of emotional wellbeing and personal growth that coming out can bring, what does this mean for coming out in an implicit manner? Does using subtle hints or brining a partner

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home still have the benefits that grand gestures do? When thinking about implicit strategies of sexuality identification, I began to wonder what role culture has played in our need to classify individuals by their sexual orientation. Why do we expect or even need someone to formally state his or her sexual orientation?

Culturally, it is strange to think about how our sexuality is said to define us. We grow up assumed to be heterosexual until said otherwise, arguably one curse of heterosexism. Our cultural need to label for perceived understanding or comfort compels us to expect straight, unless we are made aware otherwise. Furthermore, our inclination is to expect a dichotomous answer *either this or that*. What about the continuum of preference and identity in between our comfortable dichotomy? Why is this? Meyers (2000) discussed the U.S. culture's psychological "need" to categorize people as "straight" or "gay." If people don't fit in to these cultural models (yes they are cultural, not biological) the ambiguity can be anxiety provoking. It is as if once we don't understand someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, we become uncomfortable with ambiguity, uncomfortable with the hint of something we are unable to label. It is almost as if the coming out experience is about society, family and friends – when it should be about the individual. Society's desire to label and "know" has the potential to cloud the benefits of coming out for the LGBT person. Coming out is not something that happens once but rather it is a life long process, but does that mean that one has to make a formal speech every time they meet someone new with whom they chose to share their sexual orientation?

American culture has made the identification of sexual orientation, particularly in a dichotomous scheme, a stipulation for comfort level and understanding. To this end, how can we challenge ourselves and our communities to accept the ambiguity of a label-less society, and just to accept people as they are-beautifully unique?

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ALGBTIC SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

ACA Conference 2012

San Francisco, CA

Hello ALGBTIC MEMBERS!

I hope life is going well, and you are all excited for ACA in San Francisco! For those you making the trip I wanted to send you the information for some of the ALGBTIC Events so you can consider them in your planning. Please see the next three pages (7 – 9) for some of the ALGBTIC Events held this year in San Francisco.

~ Pete Finnerty, President-Elect

**Thursday March 22
3:00—6:00 PM
Moscone Convention
Center Room 2018**

**ALGBTIC Safe Schools Task
Force LGBTQIQA Safe Zone
Training** (in concordance with
the National-Gay Straight Alli-
ance Network) *

***This special education ses-
sion is limited to 50 people
and an RSVP is requested.
To RSVP please email
Anneliese Singh at
asingh@uga.edu**

**Friday March 23
3:00—5:00 PM
Golden Gate 3**

**ALGBTIC Queer People of
Color Gathering**

**This gathering celebrates
the intersectionality of diver-
sity through offering a
space for LGBTQIQA per-
sons of color to meet and
greet. Please remember this
is for all members and inter-
ested parties who value di-
versity.**

ALGBTIC SCHEDULE OF EVENTS Cont...

Friday March 23
5:00—6:00 PM
Golden Gate 3

ALGBTIC Happy Hour **Hilton's Urban Tavern bar**

Come celebrate with ALGBTIC at one of San Francisco's trendy bars in the ACA Conference Hotel. See options for purchase including appetizers, beverages and or a quick meal at <http://www.urbantavernsf.com/>

Friday 23
6:00—7:30 PM
Yosemite A

ALGBTIC Reception

Join ALGBTIC members and prospective members for light appetizers and the option to purchase a beverage as we meet and greet each other before the ACA Kickoff Reception. Bring a friend or colleague who's interested in ALGBTIC to meet our members.

Saturday March 24
11:00 AM—1:00 PM
Moscone West Convention
Center Room 3016

ALGBTIC BRUNCH

Join us for our annual awards and division brunch to enjoy the company of friends and celebrate the spirit of ALGBTIC and the LGBTQIQA community. If you have yet to purchase your ticket please do so soon by navigating the ACA site to purchase your ticket online or simply call ACA Member Services at 1-(800) 347-6647. There are only a few tickets left so act soon.

Sunday March 25
10:30 AM—12:00 PM
Franciscan D

ALGBTIC Annual Open **Member Meeting and** **Nominations**

This meeting is open for all persons to come share in ALGBTIC's yearly plan. Members will be able to share their interests, concerns, and ideas for the coming year. During this time nominations for leadership positions within ALGBTIC will be taken or letters will be read which express the nomination of an individual to a leadership position. If you cannot attend see next page for more information.

ALGBTIC ANNUAL OPEN MEETING AND NOMINATIONS

If you are unable to attend the ALGBTIC Annual Open Meeting and Nominations, you can submit a letter of nomination acceptance to be read in the meeting in writing to Pete Finnerty, ALGBTIC President-Elect (pfinnert@kent.edu) or you can send it along with someone else who will be attending. In your letter please address your qualifications for the position and what interests you in serving.

The open positions for this year are:

- President-Elect-Elect (beginning July 1, 2013)
- Secretary (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2015)
- Board Trustee I (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2016)
- Graduate Student Trustee (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014) This is a new position specifically designed to increase the voice of graduate students on the ALGBTIC Board. This Board Trustee attends Board meeting, votes on important ALGBTIC issues and concentrates on projects and issues related to graduate student concerns. This position is designed for a current ALGBTIC graduate student.

For this coming year I will be creating a taskforce focusing on Ally Development to better serve our constituents in schools and communities. Be looking for an email soon detailing election nominations and other items coming up this year.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I hope to see you all in San Francisco!

Pete Finnerty
ALGBTIC President-Elect

Coming out of the Teachers Lounge: A journey from public school teacher to counselor and ally

By Nancy Baur BS and MA Education

My name is Nancy and I am a recovering public school teacher. I am also an ally but have been in the closet for over ten years. Why, you ask? I have been teaching in the public school systems. As an undergraduate student I was an active member of the LGBT organizations on my campus and was very supportive of all of my friends who identified as being gay. I knew I loved them and wanted to do everything I could to make the world a safe and happy place for them. I thought I knew this was also true of my future students, but I was wrong. In college there are classrooms filled with ideas of multiculturalism and gender diversity, but I found out the hard way that those things stay in the classroom.

I emerged as a fresh, new teacher in the year 2001, ready to have my first classroom and fill my students' heads with diversity and acceptance of everyone. I was, after all, teaching special education and this collection of students by nature would understand what it is like to be treated differently, right? It turns out that it was not the students that I had to worry about but the teachers that were my peers and coworkers. I had imagined this world of supportive people who just wanted the best for all students and didn't care about who came from where or what had happened in their past. I was wrong and soon realized that being a teacher does not always change your feelings and thoughts about how people should be treated.

I started my career in South Carolina spreading my wings away from Ohio to

experience new cultures and adventures in life. I was a teacher! I remember walking into my first classroom (a trailer out behind the baseball field, also not what I first pictured) and making plans to fit all of my students into this warm supportive environment. I put up pictures of myself, my family and my friends in my classroom. I covered the walls with supportive pictures of kittens "hanging in there" and bright rainbow colored balloons with sayings like, "You can do anything!" Then my staff arrived. I had two assistants to help in my classroom and as soon as they stepped foot in the door they made negative comments about my room. They said there was too much color and the students would hate it. One of the assistants even told me it looked really "white" and "gay" and that I had better not talk about diversity and "all those issues" because all gays were going to hell. That is when I found out one of my assistants was a preacher and was completely intolerant of anything diverse. I was shocked. I went to the next staff meeting and told another teacher about what happened. They just laughed and said, "Welcome to the south." The rest of the staff turned out to be the same.

Over the next year of teaching high school I tried to make my environment open and friendly to all students in the school. I was scared and avoided talking about anything to do with LGBT issues because everyone seemed so hateful about the subject. I was the assistant band director and saw students struggling with their sexuality but could do nothing about it for fear of being reprimanded and losing my job. I continued to try to teach tolerance in my class-

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room but was told by the principal on multiple occasions to “stick to reading and math.” I eventually found myself deeply immersed (or drowning) in the world of special education and forgetting all my diversity ideas and programs I had planned for that year. At the end of the year I had seen students kicked out for the things they said about being gay or the way they acted in class, and I was beyond upset.

My next job was in West Virginia teaching high school again and my classroom was a self contained room for students with severe and multiple special education needs. I was again overwhelmed by my new classroom, which was this time located in an old gym locker room where I blended up the meals for the children on the back of a toilet and put them in front of the television for education. So I jumped right in as I always do and again was so busy with the tasks at hand too have focus on the diversity or lack of diversity in the school. I was teaching at a very rural school in the mountains of West Virginia but that did not mean there were not kids who were gay in that school. I soon found myself with quite a few “classroom helpers,” who just wanted a safe space to be during the day. In my room they could help the other students and also not have to be so on guard all the time about every little thing they did or said. I was again, an assistant band director, and the kids just knew that I was a safe person to be around. That did make me feel good in some ways but sad in others because the students could not trust the other teachers. I heard the driver’s education teacher tell a young man to “stop acting like a queer” and a

principal/coach yell at a student to “quit being such a fag.” I heard the teachers joke about the students like they were not even people, and I tucked myself closer and closer into my classroom. It was not until my second year at that school that something drastic happened. One of my student helpers told me she was gay and if she left my room and went home that day she was going to kill herself because she could not live any longer. I stayed with her through the process of getting her into the hospital and then into a facility for help. The principal told me not to care and she was not “my” student, but I had to help. I was conflicted, sad, angry, and hurt by what was happening to this child. Why was I the only one helping her? I found out later it was because she had said she was gay. I realized then that I had to fight more. I had to become more educated and find trickier ways to be supportive of all of my students. It was after that near loss of life that I found myself regaining the strength to ally on.

I wish I could say it lasted, but it did not. It is so hard to be a teacher and to overcome everything that is thrown at you everyday. “I could go on and on about the other students in the other schools, who came out to me and whom I had to refer to an uncaring counselor or a multiculturally incompetent principal that told me caring about them was, “not my job.” I have hundreds of stories about playing the pronoun game and taking students back to class to sit and be taunted and tortured by classmates. I saw students drop out of school, harm themselves and hide who they really were just to function for 8 hours a day. What were they learning? Why was nothing changing?

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At the end of my last year of teaching I knew that I could not be in an environment so opposed to change. There was not something wrong with the students but with the teachers. It was then I realized that I needed to help the people who were going to become teachers to be strong and resist the hate.

I am not a teacher anymore, but I am a strong ally. It was not all bad, but there was not enough good in those ten years. I am back in school to be a counselor and learn how to help be a greater ally so students do not suffer in school to just be who they are. I am an ally to the parents whose children are gay, the parents who are gay raising their children and to the teachers who want to learn how to care about all of their students. I am an ally to my friends and loved ones. I am not afraid anymore who sees me with a rainbow pin or a pride bumper sticker. I am done hiding, and I am ready to make a change. This fall I am enrolling in a doctoral program in education to ensure that I will pass on my experiences to people who are going to be teachers. I am an ally.

Nancy is in her 2nd year M.A. Clinical Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling at Ohio University. You can contact Nancy through the following email address: nc101896@ohio.edu

And then there were eight!

This past February was a good month for gay rights advocates when a federal appeals court struck down a gay ban on marriage in California better known as Proposition 8. Also in February, Governor Chris Gregoire signed into a law a measure that legalizes same-sex marriage in the state of Washington, which made Washington state the seventh state in the nation to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry. Couples in the state of Washington can begin marrying this June when the law takes effect.

March is another good month this year as gay advocates were handed another victory when Maryland's Governor Martin O'Malley signed a bill legalizing gay marriage making Maryland the eighth state to recognize gay marriage beginning 2013. The year of 2012 just might be the best year ever for legalizing gay marriage as proponents of same-sex marriage in Maine have gathered enough signatures to put a referendum on the ballot this November and ask voters to approve gay marriage just three years after voters in Maine banned them.

The states that currently recognize gay marriages are: Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, Washington state, and Maryland, plus Washington D.C. This year I will be hoping that a few more states in the Midwest and elsewhere might be a leaders or in this case even followers.

~ Cindy L. Anderton, ALGBTIC Newsletter Editor

Conditional Support

By Katie Gross, Doctoral Student, The University of Texas at San Antonio

I was looking at a local news station's website and came across an article that discussed my neighboring hometown's gay-straight alliance dance. The dance had been cancelled by a school official due to it being just a dance "for gay people" (Goudeau, 2012). The article discussed how other school officials were going to discuss the matter at a later date (Goudeau, 2012).

Over the next few days I began to think about what this meant to me. I knew it was important, but I was having a hard time putting it into words. Since my beginning as a counselor I knew I wanted to work with children and adolescents. I also knew that LGBT issues were important in counseling. It wasn't until I read this article that I put the two together. Working with children and adolescents who are struggling with LGBT issues became something that I really wanted to learn more about. I was not sure where to start though.

About a week after reading the news article, I saw a commercial about this new special program on TV. It is called, "It Gets Better," and it is focused on supporting young people struggling with LGBT issues (It Gets Better Project, 2012) and supports gay-straight alliances in schools across the U.S. The program was founded in 2010 by a man who wanted to provide the support that he did not receive. I made sure to watch the program when it aired and so many things stood out to me. The main things were how the adolescents were affected by LGBT issues. One boy planned to come out to his parents and had to have a safe place to go after his parents read his coming out letter. A young girl's mother questioned her feminist characteristics after coming

out. A young adult couple was scared to discuss being transgender with their wedding officiant. Because I have not worked with young clients experiencing LGBT issues, I really enjoyed seeing the real life (however exaggerated for TV) stories. It is much different than reading research.

I wanted to write about this topic for several reasons. It was important to me to share this resource with other counselors and counselor educators. The It Gets Better Project provides resources on their website which can be accessed at www.itgetsbetter.org. Those who choose to support this project financially can buy a book to be donated to a school or a town library (It Gets Better Project, 2012). I really liked this part because it provides a non-internet based resource for kids to potentially be accessed through school. As a new counselor intern and PhD student, I was attracted to the supportive resource this provides. It provides current information that we, as counselors, can utilize. It is also a good resource, if it can be used safely, for our young clients struggling with LGBT issues.

To tie the It Gets Better Project back to the cancelled gay-straight alliance dance, I wanted to highlight the mixed messages things like this send. How are our youth supposed to feel supported when authority figures only want to support them in a conditional manner? As counselors, we can do several things for our clients to help combat and hopefully eliminate these mixed messages. First, we can advocate and speak up when we see things like this come up. Even if we do not have a client directly related to the situation, a five minute phone call could make a difference.

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Second, we can share this resource with our clients. Last, we can share this resource with our community. The more we speak up and advocate for LGBT issues, the more support we can create for our youth who identify as LGBT and who may be struggling in some way.

References

Goudeau, A. (2012, February 17). Dispute in Bastrop ISD over Gay-Straight Alliance Tolerance Week. Retrieved from <http://www.kvue.com/news/Dispute-in-Bastrop-ISD-over-Gay-Straight-Alliance-Tolerance-Week-139551303.html>.

It Gets Better Project. (2012). Savage Love, LLC. Retrieved from <http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>.

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The ALGBTIC Safe Schools Task Force

is teaming up with the

National Gay-Straight Alliance Network

in San Francisco at ACA 2012
to present a special learning session:

LGBTQQIA Safe Zone Training

March 22, 2012, Thursday

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

2018 Moscone Convention Center

***PLEASE JOIN US AND LEARN HOW TO MAKE YOUR SCHOOLS
SAFER FOR LGBTQQIA YOUTH!***

***SPACE IS LIMITED TO 50 PEOPLE. RSVP REQUESTED by emailing
Anneliese Singh at asingh@uga.edu***

A Call for Allies: Social Justice for LGBTIQQ Persons

By Matthew Branfield & Maiko Xiong
ALGBTIC Membership Committee Co-chairs

Allies are needed in solidarity to effectively add to the LGBTIQQ equality movement. In the professional field of counseling we emphasize and promote psychological well-being, agency, and general wellness. These latter philosophical underpinnings inform much of our strength-based work. It is hard to imagine facilitating psychological well-being, agency, and general wellness without taking into consideration the sociological impact heterosexism has on LGBTIQQ persons. As allies, we can contribute to achieving equality by being knowledgeable of the unique cultural considerations of the LGBTIQQ community such as the coming out process and by helping other people understand the importance of social justice for LGBTIQQ persons.

Recently the authors came across an article in Rolling Stone Magazine titled *One Town's War on Gay Teens*. The article discussed a rash of teen suicides that occurred in less than two years in Anoka, Minnesota. The article demonstrated the town's incessantly anti-gay climate and how the climate begets severe psychological distress on LGBTIQQ youth. This highlights the dire climate many LGBTIQQ persons face each day and the subsequent psychological consequences of living in a heterosexist world. While it is encouraging to note increasingly some states are adopting same-sex equality laws, the article in Rolling Stone Magazine is a reminder how much work still needs to be accomplished in the fight for social justice.

Social Justice for the LGBTIQQ Community

There is a paucity of literature that addresses the significant role heterosexual allies can play within the LGBTIQQ community. In fact, the

preponderance of LGBTIQQ advocacy literature has focused solely on LGBTIQQ activists (Russell, 2011). Yet, as an oppressed community, it is not enough to merely have LGBTIQQ activists. Members of the advantaged group (heterosexual persons) are in a privileged position to align themselves with the LGBTIQQ community. And there are copious reasons heterosexual persons **should** align themselves as allies. Ji (2007) delineates thirteen reasons heterosexual persons should align themselves as allies, including: (a) aid in diminishing social and systemic oppression of LGBTIQQ persons, (b) dispel negative misconceptions that continue to be socially propagated, and (c) assist in providing a social environment of acceptance.

A recent Delphi study was conducted to determine emerging ethical issues in the field of professional counseling. A panel of experts reported that dealing with social justice and diversity issues will be the most important ethical issue the counseling profession will need to address during the next five years (Herlihy & Dufrene, 2011). Unfortunately, many counseling training programs have yet to fully implement strategies to infuse social justice counseling into ethical practice for counseling students (Toporek & McNally, 2006). This highlights the importance of advocating for oppressed groups such as the LGBTIQQ community.

Research has demonstrated members of the LGBTIQQ community face subtle and covert acts of discrimination, including sexual orientation and transgender microaggressions such as heterosexist language and the assumption of abnormality, as well as overt acts of discrimination such as a hate crime. These subtle, covert, and overt acts of discrimination

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stem from modern heterosexism and modern homonegativity. The discrimination LGBTIQQ persons face can have detrimental psychological consequences, including higher rates of suicide, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and internalized homophobia (Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010). Allies, as members of a socially advantaged group, are in a privileged position and can utilize this privilege as a means of normalizing members of the LGBTIQQ community while pugnaciously and vociferously fighting for social justice.

Role of Counselor Educators, Counselors, and School Counselors

The authors of this article contend heterosexual counselors can and **should** align themselves as allies for the LGBTIQQ community. As counselors, we advocate for our clients on the micro level and assist in cultivating our clients' sense of agency. It seems reasonable to suggest we, as counselors, should also advocate for our clients on the macro (or social) level as well. The ACA's Code of Ethics (2005) notes the importance of promoting "human dignity" (p. 2). Thus, the fight for social justice is consistent with the values the counseling profession champions.

Social justice counseling can be simply viewed as recognizing how oppression impacts clients' psychological well-being and then working to advocate for justice. Or as Lee (1997) states, "counseling for social justice is more than a professional obligation; it is about living one's life in a manner that is dedicated to promoting access and equity" (p. 1). Thus, as counseling programs work to build social justice counseling into their programs, several components must be considered when training counseling students. Caldwell and Vera (2010) reported that participants who were ex-

posed to acts of injustice by persons of significance such as family members or teachers were increasingly likely to note these latter incidents as critical moments that shaped their social justice orientation. Additionally, heightened awareness was considered as a significant result of orienting oneself towards a social justice perspective. As a result of the findings, when working with an oppressed group such as the LGBTIQQ community, counselor educators need to include LGBTIQQ dialogue into the curriculum to expose students to the strength-based realities (such as the resiliency displayed by many members of the LGBTIQQ community) and the oppression faced by members of the LGBTIQQ community. Awareness through assigned books and readings, inviting members of the LGBTIQQ community as speakers for a panel, teaching strategies of empowerment when working with clients, and learning how to dismantle one's own privilege and power are a few ideas toward a social justice counseling movement.

Social justice counseling works with clients in acknowledging how the broader social context impact clients thus implementing interventions that consider the impact of the broader social context is an important aspect. The LGBTIQQ community is an oppressed community that experiences a range of institutionalized racism such as unequal marriage laws, refusal to acknowledge more than binary gender categories, lack of bathrooms to support transgender persons, and more. As counselors, we work with clients to explore their inner beings. Counselors much also consider the inequality and oppression clients' have experienced as the next steps in promoting equity for oppressed clients.

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Counselors can align themselves as allies in many ways, from simply placing LGBTIQQ literature in one's office or wearing a rainbow button with the word ally embedded, to verbally denouncing heterosexism. There are also voluminous groups and organizations allies can get involved with. Below you will find a list of a few organizations and resources dedicated to LGBTIQQ equality.

- *Out & Equal: Workplace Advocates:* <http://tinyurl.com/8a4spxh>
- *LGBT Center Advocacy Project:* <http://tinyurl.com/7qm6rbp>
- *Empowering Spirits Foundation:* <http://tinyurl.com/ykz7n65>
- *Human Rights Campaign:* <http://www.hrc.org/>
- *National Transgender Advocacy:* <http://tinyurl.com/7q2z2ar>
- *GLAAD:* <http://www.glaad.org>
- *Teaching Tools:* www.tolerance.org
- *Resources for Schools:* www.gsanetwork.org
- *Parents, Family, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays:* www.pflag.org
- *Hope for LGBT Youth:* www.itgetsbetter.org
- *Google for local resources in Safe Zone Trainings and Ally Training*

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**Spring is when you feel like
whistling even with a shoe full
of slush. ~ Doug Larson**



Call for individuals to help with ALGBTIC Newsletter

Are you interested in becoming involved in the publication of the ALGBTIC Newsletter? We are looking for individuals who are interested in being mentored for the Co-Editor position of the ALGBTIC Newsletter with a future possibility of becoming the Editor. This service opportunity would involve becoming mentored and engaging in some of the following activities related to publication of the ALGBTIC Newsletter:

- putting out calls for submissions (for general or special Editions of the newsletter,
- writing articles on legislation or newsworthy events,
- reviewing articles submitted to the newsletter and determining appropriateness for readership,
- Reviewing the drafts of newsletters and offering suggestions and corrections for the editor, and
- developing and publishing the ALGBTIC newsletter online for the website and distribution to the members of ALGBTIC (Currently the newsletter is developed using Microsoft Publisher)

If you have interest in taking part in this opportunity please email the current Editor at: andertoc@uww.edu

Note: In your email please include a brief summary of why you would like to become involved and any experience you have that would make you a good fit for this exciting opportunity.

ALGBTIC, a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA) is inviting submissions for our journal, ***The Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling***. The intent of this journal is to publish articles relevant to working with sexual minorities and that will be of interest to counselors, counselor educators, and other counseling related professionals that work across a diversity of fields, including in schools, mental health settings, family agency's, and colleges and universities.

This journal welcomes the submission of articles that reflect issues pertinent to the health of sexual minority individuals and communities, and should focus in one of the following areas: (1) new research in the field of counseling, (2) introduction of new/innovative practices within the counseling field, or (3) theoretical or conceptual pieces, including reviews of the literature, that reflect new ideas or new ways of integrating previously held ideas. The journal is distributed quarterly. For detailed submission guidelines please contact Ned Farley, Ph.D., editor, at efarley@antioch.edu or go to the journal website at: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/WLCO>

Coming out in the next Edition of the ALGBTIC Newsletter: A book review of a promising resource!!!

“A Sexuality & Gender Diversity Training Program: Increasing the Competency of Mental Health Professionals”

By Rebekah A. Jackson
Kathy A. McCloskey
Robin P. McHaelen

Published by Professional Resource Press: Sarasota, FL

This resource also offers a 3-credit home study continuing education program that is available as a supplement to this book. The book also includes a CD ROM with 10 Complete Exercises.

Wait for the review or you can find out more about this resource by going to the publisher website at: <http://www.prpress.com/books/SGD.html>

Concerning Legislation!!!

If you haven't been on the ALGBTIC Facebook page there is pending legislation in Michigan that is quite concerning. This legislation has come about due to the outcome of the Eastern Michigan University case and is proposing to address the following:

Agenda:

HR 111 (Haveman) A resolution to memorialize the President and the United States Congress to enact legislation protecting the rights of conscience of students seeking counseling degrees and licensed professional counselors.

HR 112 (Haveman) A resolution to urge Michigan's public universities to adopt policies to protect the rights of students in counseling, social work, or psychology programs who are faced with situations that conflict with their religious beliefs.

HB 5040 (Haveman) Higher education; education programs; education programs for counselors, social workers, and psychologists; prohibit discrimination against students for sincerely held religious beliefs.

To view text of legislation go to: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/mileg.asp?page=Bills>

Contact the Michigan House Standing Committee, Education committee to express your concerns.

Unique Challenges of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Military Families

By Martina M. Sternberg, Ph.D., Retired USAF, Purdue University, Military Family Research Institute and mother of a lesbian active duty soldier

My personal experience as the mother of a lesbian soldier was, both heart warming and heart wrenching. As a retired military member myself, I am very proud of my daughter who joined the Army and is a soldier in the 82nd Airborne Division (she jumps out of airplanes). It was heart wrenching when she was deployed to Iraq for over a year and could not communicate with her partner because of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy." Mail and emails can be censored by the military and if she communicated with her partner, and was outed, she could be discharged from serving the country that she loves. I had to be the go between for my daughter and her partner. When she came home after a long year in Iraq, her partner accompanied me to the welcome home ceremony. They could not hug like heterosexual partners, and she had to introduce her partner as her cousin. I looked around and saw soldiers all alone with no one to welcome them home and thank them for their sacrifice. I had to wonder how many of these soldiers that were sitting on the tarmac all alone were gay or lesbian soldiers, counting the minutes until they could go home and be welcomed by their loved ones while the heterosexual couples were already embracing. As a counselor educator, it is my hope that counselors are prepared to work with gay and lesbian clients who are in the military.

Prior to 1993, lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) service members were not allowed to serve in the military. The Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) policy was implemented in 1993 which allowed LGB service members to serve in silence or risk being discharged from the military. However, on September 20, 2011, The United States (U.S.) became the 23rd NATO country to allow LGB service members to openly serve. There are an estimated 71,000 LGB service members in all branches of the U.S. military, according to a study by UCLA's Williams Institute (2010). Many of those service members also have families who serve. LGB service members were polled and report that now that DADT has been repealed, they will be more likely to be open about their sexual orientation. Rand (2010) found that 93% of participants (heterosexual and LGB) in their study agreed that LGB military members have dependents who are missing out on opportunities and support systems that heterosexual military families are afforded. However, at this writing, LGB service members and their families do not receive the same support and benefits as heterosexual military families (Hummer, 2011). Although LGB service members and their families can openly serve in the military, LGB military families, at this time, are not afforded the same support and benefits as heterosexual service members, in part due to the Defense of Marriage (DOMA) Act. DOMA is a federal act that defines marriage as the legal union between one man and one woman and further defines a spouse as a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife. Although individual states can allow and recognize same sex unions, other states do not have to recognize or allow same sex marriages and regardless of whether or not a state recognizes a same sex marriage, the federal government can not due to DOMA which means gay and lesbian military families are not recognized as married nor as families.

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The U.S. military recognizes the importance of the military family and the important role that the family plays in helping to create a strong military (Burrell, 2003; Congressional Digest, 2010; Department of Defense, 2008; Rounds, 2010; Schwartz & Donley, 2009). The military has created and implemented many support systems for heterosexual military members. Broadening support to all service members and their families by opening acknowledging and supporting LGB families culturally, legally, and by providing resources can only continue to strengthen military families and ultimately the U.S. military.

The military understands the importance of supporting the military family through support, resources, and benefits. Providing resources for those who provide services for LGB military families, as well as resources for LGB military families can assist in supporting the LGB military family. One recent study found that most mental health organizations that specialized in treating lesbians, were not prepared and did not have the resources to treat lesbian military members. Many counselors may have expertise in working with gay and lesbian clients. Concurrently, many counselors may have expertise in working with military related clients. However, counselors may NOT have had experience or education in working with military clients who are also lesbian or gay due to the stigma and possible outing of gay and lesbian service members.

What can we do as counselors or counselor educators to work with lesbian and gay military members and their families?

Working with and supporting military families in general can carry a unique set of challenges. The military culture promotes independence and an “I can do it” culture, and asking for help may be considered a weakness by some military members and their families. Sexual orientation can confound the stigma of asking for help for gay and lesbian service members, since throughout the history of the military they were at risk of being outed even when they did feel the need to ask for help. Support and resources for gay and lesbian families in the military were nonexistent. GLB service members and their families were/are silenced by the “I can do it” culture of military and confounded with the possibility of being ostracized for coming out in a culture that has historically rejected service members based on a gay/lesbian/bisexual sexual orientation. Displaying support, empathy, and compassion can help gay, lesbian, and bisexual military families manage the unique challenges they face in military service. Understanding the experiences of gay and lesbian service members and their families and offering support can assist in the transition to and success in the new *post* Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell environment.

Counselors can also:

- Create and present at or attend workshops and read articles related to gay and lesbian military families
- Talk to gay and lesbian service members and their families about their experiences
- Create and maintain a learning environment as a counselor educator about gay and lesbian service members and their families.

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- Use gender neutral language (instead of husband and wife, use partner or significant other)
- Learn about resources available to gay and lesbian service members and their families to include PFFLAG, HRC, SLDN, AVER, GLSEN
- Know what it means to be gay/lesbian friendly – display a gay or lesbian placard (rainbow) –advertise your services in gay and lesbian yellow pages or gay friendly websites or other social media avenues
- Create support groups for gay and lesbian families so they can address issues and support one another
- Engage in research related to gay and lesbian military families
- Create a safe space where children with lesbian/gay/bisexual service member parents can talk about their families without fear that anything bad happening to them or their parents as a result
- Simply show your support by: not allowing offensive language, stories, or “jokes; joining supportive organizations; showing sensitivity to others’ experiences; and increasing your own education and understanding about issues that impact GLB families

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Palm Center, <http://www.palmcenter.org/>

Training Workshops for Educators and Community Leaders, Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html>

Family Equality Council, <http://www.familyequality.org/site/PageServer?pagename=homepage>

Service members Legal Defense Network, <http://www.sldn.org/>

Human Rights Campaign military information, <http://www.hrc.org/issues/military.asp>

Parents, families and friends of gays and lesbian (PFFLAG), <http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=194&srcid=-2>

Service members United, <http://www.servicemembers.org/>

American Veterans for Equal Rights, <http://www.aver.us/aver/>

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), www.glsen.org

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ALGBTIC News, the newsletter of the Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling, is published three times annually. The ALGBTIC News is typically published online for summer and fall. Our Pre-Conference issue is a mailed hardcopy. The publication dates and submission deadlines are:

Summer edition: July 31

Submission deadline: June 15

Winter edition: December 24

Submission deadline: December 1, 2011

Pre-Conference edition: March 15

Submission deadline: February 24

Submission Guidelines:

Submit articles and items that would be of interest to our readership and ALGBTIC members. Information should be current and informative. Submissions that promote dialogue and opinion are especially encouraged.

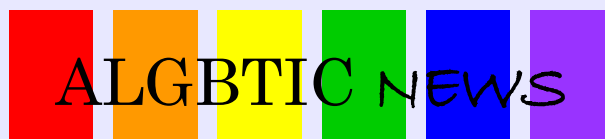
All submissions should be sent to the Editor via email as a Microsoft Word attachment. Please be advised that the Editor has the right to edit your submission due to space considerations and/or content issues.

Please send your submissions to:

Cindy Anderton, Ph.D. at

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Disclaimer: Although ALGBTIC News attempts to publish articles and items of interest that are consistent with the mission and goals of ALGBTIC, they do not necessarily reflect the overarching opinions, policies, or priorities of ALGBTIC or ACA.



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