

ASSOCIATION FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN COUNSELING

*A Division of the American
Counseling Association*

Spring 2015 Newsletter

Greetings from the Newsletter Editor, Franco Dispenza

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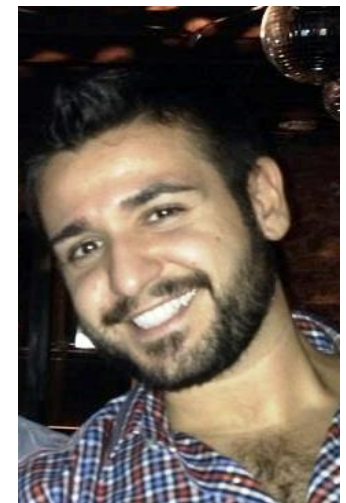
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Greetings and Happy Spring! First, I would like to take a moment and thank you all for your continued support of ALGBTIC. As the new newsletter editor, I have some rather big shoes to fill, but it is an opportunity that I am very excited to have. ALGBTIC is active, growing, and committed to supporting the lives of LGBTQ persons. As one of my priorities, it is essential that you stay informed of the Association, and issues that may impact the lives of diverse LGBTQ persons living across the United States of America, and the world.

I figured, it would be best to tell you all a little bit about myself. I am a native of Brooklyn, New York, and now reside in Atlanta, Georgia. I completed my undergraduate education at SUNY Albany, and soon after completed my Master's degree from a CORE accredited program in Rehabilitation Counseling. After working some time in higher education and in community mental health, I returned to school to complete my doctorate in Counseling Psychology. I am a certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC), a licensed psychologist in the state of Georgia,

and I work full time as an Assistant Professor at Georgia State University. My scholarship and clinical specialization is in the area of sexual and gender diversity. I focus on three particular aspects with this population: (1) the experience of Chronic Illness and Disability (CID); (2) lifespan and career/vocational development; (3) counselor education and training.

To say the least, 2015 has been a politically energetic year across the United States of America. Sexual orientation and gender related rights have been at the forefront of many forms of legislation, some recently signed and others proposed. LGBTQ rights will continue to be a focal point of discussion in months to come, and this will no doubt have implications for ALGBTIC. As a result, we need our members to continue being active, involved, and committed to the diverse lives of LGBTQ persons *and our allies*. We need our Association members to continue challenging hurtful discriminatory and oppressive practices that



*Franco Dispenza
Newsletter Editor*

impact our communities, and continue to address the mental health and well-being of our diverse LGBTQ clients and consumers.

Moving forward, I wish this newsletter to be informative and insightful. I also hope to use the newsletter as a platform to promote ALGBTIC, and the wonderful work of its members across the globe. Please do not hesitate to email me at FDispenza1@gsu.edu. I hope to see future submissions from all of our members.

ALGBTIC's Queer People of Color (QPOC) Gathering

By Dr. Joel M. Filmore

Hello ALGBTIC! What an amazing conference we had in Florida this past March. I was happy to see so many members in attendance. Part of my role as a Professional Trustee with ALGBTIC's Executive Board is that of Multicultural Liaison. I head-up the Queer People of Color Committee and we had a phenomenal turnout!

We live in a time of struggle for people within the LGBTQ community as well as communities of color. The Supreme Court is weighing marriage equality, while racial issues such as those that are happening in Ferguson and Baltimore serve to shed light on what we've all known. You have but to turn on the television or pick up a newspaper to see that there seems to be a concerted attack on these groups.

The focus, and purpose, of the QPOC committee is to be intentional about ensuring there is 'room at the table' for all members to be heard and to share their thoughts on how our organization can better serve those who have traditionally been disenfranchised. To that end, our meeting in Florida was a rousing success! We had over 20 QPOC attend as well as ALGBTIC's President, Dr. Jane Rheineck, and other members of the Executive Board who were not necessarily QPOC but Allies.

As we move forward, as a committee, some of the things that we are focusing on are the creation and dissemination of research specifically related to QPOC issues, creating more emphasis on the intersectionality

of race/ethnicity and sexual/affectional orientation, as well as the development of the QPOC Mentoring Program.

This is an exciting time to be involved in ALGBTIC and we are asking anyone that is interested in joining with the QPOC Committee (regardless of race/ethnicity or sexual/affectional orientation) to contact us about opportunities! We look forward to growing this group so that we can begin the process of forging a new path towards unity within, and without, our community.



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Recap of the ALGBTIC Awards at ACA 2015

By Hugh C. Crethar, Past President

*Mentor Award Presented to
Dr. Michael Kocet*



This year, it was our pleasure to present awards to four very deserving recipients at the ACA Conference in Orlando. Each recipient was most deserving of the award for service rendered to our association and/or those whom we serve.

Roanoke Diversity Center, among numerous other areas. Dr. Farmer is an exemplary member of ALGBTIC and a committed ally.

Third, the Mentor Award was presented to Dr. Michael Kocet. As a Past President of ALGBTIC, Dr. Kocet has mentored many of us in the membership as well as the leadership of ALGBTIC. As one of his nominators stated, "Overall, Michael leads by example and with encouragement and insistence for all he mentors. He is what ALGBTIC is all about: passionate advocacy and leadership for all those marginalized by society." His ongoing service within our division includes helping make the 3rd Annual Rainbow Run in Orlando a success.

First, the Graduate Student Award was presented for Mr. Matthew Beck of the University of Iowa. Matthew is a burgeoning scholar in LGBT issues and a tireless worker for social justice in the schools regarding the treatment of LGBTQQI individuals. We are excited to see what Matthew will do as he continues to develop in the field.

Next, the Service Award was presented to Dr. Laura Farmer of Virginia Tech University. Dr. Farmer champions the mission of ALGBTIC through her work as a counselor, counselor educator, and researcher. Her service includes work making a difference in her community, where she developed LGBTQQI Support groups focusing on "Serious Health Issues" and "Coming Out Issues" in Roanoke Virginia with the



*Service Award Presented to Dr. Laura
Farmer of Virginia Tech University*

Joe Norton Award

By Hugh C. Crethar, Past President

The Joe Norton Award, along with the proceeds from the 3rd Annual Rainbow Run were presented to the Zebra Coalition (<http://zebrayouth.org/>). The Zebra Coalition is a network of organizations which provide services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and all youth (LGBT+) ages 13 – 24 in the Orlando, Florida area. The Coalition assists young people facing home-

lessness; bullying; physical, sexual and drug abuse; and isolation from their families with individualized programs to guide them to recovery and stability. We had a wonderful time meeting and working with the fabulous personnel of the Zebra Coalition. Our world needs many more such organizations.



Zebra Coalition , Joe Norton Award Recipients

3rd Annual Rainbow Run 5k & 1 Mile Walk for Wellness and Equality A Success!

Pete Finnerty, Tonya Hammer, Amanda Brace, and Michael Kocet



The annual Rainbow Run 5k & 1 mile walk was a big success again this year, with over 100 signups and over 50 of those persons at the onsite race on Sunday of the American Counseling Association Conference! The greatest aspect of our little event is every year we have the ability to give a substantial sum to a wonderful local organization. This year the Zebra Coalition, an organization that serves underprivileged LGBTQ youth, was the beneficiary (zebrayouth.org). We had an amazing contingent of virtual runners/walkers this year, some of whom event put on their own runs with others in the Bay Area and Idaho! As we reflected on our race this year the main tenet we come back to is how wonderful the experience is getting to know the community in the conference city. We engage further, create dialogue and have a great time. This is advocacy for LGBTQ persons in general but also for the profession of counseling. We hope you will join us in the coming years. We also want to thank all the individuals, volunteers and organizations we worked with to make this event happen! We hope to see you in following years!

As we recap the race this year we want to acknowledge all of our sponsors. They are:

- Assoc. of LGBT Issues in Counseling
- American Counseling Association and ACA Foundation Trust
- Assoc. of Counselor Education and Supervision
- International Assoc. of Addictions & Offender Counselors
- Assoc. of Multicultural Development
- National Career Development Assoc.
- Oxford Univ. Press
- Rollins College Counseling Dept.
- Mental Health Academy
- Assoc. for Humanistic Counseling
- Assoc. for Adult Development and Aging
- Assoc. for Specialists in Group Work
- Alexander Street Press
- Road ID
- OutaTime Race Timing
- USA Track & Field

Affirmative LGBT Programming at Spring 2015 NCRE Conference

By *Robert (Rob) L. Stevens, MS, LPC-CR, CRC, CDCA

The National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) 15th Annual Spring 2015 conference was held April 22-24, 2015 at the Marriott Newport Beach Hotel & Spa in Newport Beach, California. I was happy to see that the conference lived up to its theme these year which was entitled "Broadening Our Horizon through Collaboration: Opening the Box and Talking" by offering several LGBT themed and/or related education and poster sessions. LGBT issues were a strong presence at this year's conference, validating that we have allies in our profession who affirm LGBTQ persons across counseling professions. It was even great to see that several of the presentations were even given by active members of AGLBTIC and past leadership of AGLBTIC state chapters. I was fortunate enough to attend a few of the sessions while at the conference. Sessions topics included:

- Rehabilitation Counseling with LGBQ Persons Living with Chronic Illness/Disability
- Religious Fundamentalism: How Does It Impact Counselor Trainee's Attitudes toward Sexual Minorities?
- Counseling & Employment Considerations for an Inclusive LGBT Workforce: Applying ALGBTIC Competencies
- Vocational Rehabilitation Considerations for LGBT Clients with HIV/AIDS

It was not unusual to see packed rooms, audience members having lots of questions, and strong applauses for the presenters. It is great to see that the leadership of NCRE is ensuring that rehabilitation counseling students, professionals, and educators are given opportunities to learn and discuss issues that clients who identify as LGBTQ may face. It is my hope that NCRE will continue to provide educational sessions on LGBT, sexuality, and disabilities.



**Robert Stevens is a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision at Ohio University, Athens, OH*

*Dr. Mona Robinson and Dr. Jonathan Procter
ALGBTIC members presenting at NCRE*

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

The Association for Adult Development and Aging (AADA) Summer Conference

DATE: August 6 & 7, 2015

PLACE: New York City

Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling

DATE: July 16-18, 2015

PLACE: New York City

Coping in the Aftermath of Anti-LGBT Legislation

By *Caleb Chadwick, M.Ed.

As a member of the LGBT community, I have witnessed historic discourse relating to my identity within United States and local political arenas. While living in Tennessee, I saw my local government institute a non-discrimination policy protecting LGBT individuals, only to see the state strike it down. Similarly, the Indiana "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" recently garnered national attention as a landmark anti-LGBT piece of legislation. The policies being instituted with these pieces of legislation have a host of negative consequences for LGBT individuals. In fact, beyond the policies themselves, the discourse surrounding anti-LGBT political events also carry considerable psychological stressors. The gestalt of experience can be marginalizing and triggering. In light of these negative outcomes, it can be helpful to identify coping strategies.

Identify Safe Spaces – It can be helpful to find physical and/or psychological space where you can be your authentic self and express all aspects of your identity freely. Utilizing these spaces becomes especially important when public discourse centers around anti-LGBT legislation, making LGBT identities especially vulnerable to microaggressions, experienced stigma, or even physical or psychological violence.

Process With Allies – Connecting and processing events with individuals who you know to be affirming and accepting can have a normalizing effect on any stress you may be experiencing in the wake of anti-LGBT legislation, elections, or public discourse. It can be healing simply to know that you are not alone in your experience.

Choose Your Social Media Wisely – Social media is a dangerous place during heated public discourse. Filters are lost as often as logic, and there is a high potential for encountering trolling, bullying, cruelty, and generally negative ideas. Anticipate these encounters. You might hide individuals from your newsfeed, consider avoiding social media altogether, or simply engage at your discretion and brace yourself for the inevitable.



**Caleb Chadwick is a second year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.*

Find an Affirming News Source – When keeping up with the progress of anti-LGBT legislation, it can become very frustrating to consume journalism that does not have a good foundation in LGBT issues. Worse still is when these news sources contain anti-LGBT bias. Identifying a trusted news source can be very helpful, particularly when legislation has not garnered national attention and remains highly localized. Still, many local communities have LGBT news blogs, which may be a helpful context for news consumption.

Get Involved/Advocacy – Getting politically involved and taking action in a more concrete way not only has the potential to improve the socioeconomic climate for LGBT individuals. It also has the helpful potential side effect of purging that nagging sense of frustration and helplessness that comes from observing the political process from the outside.

Naturally, this is not a sufficient or complete list of coping strategies. We develop personal coping strategies in our lives that help us through difficult times, and those unique tactics may prove even more useful. As the battle for LGBT equity and equality surges on in the political arena, finding ways to persist through the struggle will continue to be necessary for each member of our community. Stay resilient and be well.

TEXAS COUNSELING ASSOCIATION CONDEMNS PRACTICE OF SOCE BY COUNSELORS IN THE STATE

Beck Munsey, Senator

Lisa Pearson, Director, Texas Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling

"TCA's position statement on Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) – was adopted by the Senate following a dynamic and collaborative discussion. Please share with your Division or Chapters that 'TCA takes the position that counselors practice based on the best research and clinical evidence available and avoid practices found harmful such as but not limited to Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE), which include reparative and conversion therapies.'"

Texas Counseling Association President Le'Ann Solmonson wrote the above in a recent letter to the members of the TCA Board of Directors. She was referring to the long awaited culmination of efforts by TALGBTIC to improve the safety and effectiveness of counseling of LGBTs in Texas. With the support of Le'Ann and key members of the TCA Board and Senate, we persuaded TCA to take a public position on an issue that has long concerned LGBT-positive counselors: the ongoing practice of so-called reparative therapy by some counselors and other mental health professionals.

In 2012, under the leadership of then-President Adrian Warren, the TALGBTIC Board had moved forward to address two major issues of relevance to our profession: same sex marriage and the continuing practice of Sexual Orientation Change Efforts by counselors in Texas. In collaboration with Adrian and our newly elected TALGBTIC Senator Beck Munsey, I wrote and presented a motion on each issue to the TCA Board at our meeting in November of that year. With regard to same sex marriage, the Board requested assistance with resources to support discussion of marriage for all among TCA chapters and divisions. We provided that at the subsequent board meeting (*available upon request from Lisa Pearson*).

The TCA Board was very sympathetic to our concern about the use of SOCE (Sexual Orientation Change Efforts), practices known to be potentially harmful to counseling patients and considered unethical by mainline healthcare and mental healthcare professional organizations and most practitioners. The Board asked TALGBTIC to prepare a position paper on the issue. It took two years, but finally, by November of 2014, TCA Emerging Leader TALGBTIC Senator Beck Munsey, along with TALGBTIC President Faith Harper and other members of our Board of Directors, had written a fifty-page essay, complete with bibliography, covering the development of SOCE, the emergence of Christian religious ideas among

certain groups about the supposed sinfulness of minority sexual orientation and gender identity, and the research proving the inefficacy and potential harmfulness of SOCE, as well as information about safer and more effective means of counseling LGBT persons (*available on the TALGBTIC website*).

When we presented our paper to the TCA President a week before the November TCA Board meeting, she asked us for one-page summary of the content of the paper, which we then prepared and presented, along with a motion, to the Board. Lisa's motion that TCA adopt the position that Texas counselors should refrain from the use of SOCE was passed by the Board after a brief discussion.

But the TCA Board does not make TCA policy; it can only recommend. Rules and policies must be adopted by the Texas Counseling Association Senate. So there was one more step to be taken to complete our TALGBTIC objective of making counseling safer for LGBTQ consumers in Texas: getting the related motion passed by the TCA Senate. In presenting his motion Beck met some opposition at the Senate meeting, mostly out of resistance to placing restrictions on a counselor's clinical practice decisions. After some discussion, the motion was tabled briefly so it could be rewritten with the assistance of small ad hoc task force, which included some members of the objecting party.

As noted, one of the major voices of the opposition was concerned with the motion's apparently prescriptive or restrictive language - telling counselors how to practice counseling. In the final version, as it turned out, adding the "research and clinical methods" wording made all the difference. The new motion was passed overwhelmingly, with only two senators voting against.

This was a great victory for TALGBTIC, after a couple of years and lots of hard work! It was also a lesson in trusting one's colleagues and supporters to pitch in with practical solutions in the case of an impasse, and in driving projects to completion even as board members and representatives go in and out of office over time. This is especially helpful when one is emotionally, ethically, and professionally invested in the outcome of a vote.

!!!!Save the Date!!!!



Bi-Annual ALGBTIC Conference
San Antonio, Texas
September 16 and 17, 2016

The ALGBTIC Newsletter is Welcoming Submissions!

Please review our guidelines for submission. We would love to hear from professional counselors, counseling students, counselor educators, and counselors working in research settings. Contribute your voice to the next ALGBTIC newsletter. Please contact Franco Dispenza, Newsletter Editor at fdispenza1@gsu.edu with any questions.

Guidelines for Newsletter Submissions

All submissions must be electronic, written in Microsoft Word document formats (.doc or .docx) and included as an email attachment.

All submissions must be in 12-pt Times New Roman font with 1" margins.

All submissions must adhere to word limits for article category.

All submissions must include author's name, degree(s), academic or institutional affiliation, telephone number and email address in a cover email.

Any citations must follow APA Style Manual, 6th Edition, and language should be free of bias in accordance with APA's style guidelines.

Any articles not adhering to #1-5 above will be returned to the author for revision before review.

We welcome all submissions 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.

Submission Categories

New and Noteworthy – this category is for upcoming social, political or advocacy current events. Events may be local, statewide, or national in scope. Also may include synopses of current news items or media (films, art, music) that may be of interest to our readers. 500 words or less.

State Chapter News – this category is for legislative and scope of practice updates from our state chapter leaders, and for any counseling-related or LGBT-affirmative events that the state wants to publicize. For example: rallies, benefit walks, legislative action days, etc. 500 words or less.

Fresh off the Presses – this section highlights chapters, books, and articles (peer-reviewed or not) written by ALGBTIC members and student members. Only 3 publications per member will be included in an issue of the newsletter. Full citations, please.

Practice Matters – this category is for practicing professional counselors, counseling interns or counseling psychologists to address topics of relevance to practitioners in agency or private practice settings. Examples include multicultural concerns, insurance involvement in client care, DSM-V impact, ethical issues. 1,000 words or less.

Major Contribution – this category is for academic articles on the theory or practice of counseling or counselor education. Submissions welcomed from faculty, graduate students, and LGBT scholars and allies. 1,500 words or less.

Difficult Dialogues – this category is for controversial topics of interest or discussions between professionals on two sides of an issue. For example, medically assisted hormone blockage for trans-identified children. 1,000 words or less.