

ALGBTIC

NEWS MAGAZINE

FALL 2019

Misty Ginicola and making ALGBTIC is INDIVISIBLE!

Clark Ausloos discusses making learning environments inclusive for all

Laura Farmer and H Smith share the story of SAGA in Roanoke, VA

Supporting Trans Students in College Counseling

Stephanie Preston-Hughes is a Lesbian on a Mission:

Find out how she is helping move a conversion therapy ban in the Sunshine State



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NEWS MAGAZINE **FALL 2019**

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In this issue:

Meet ALGBTIC News Magazine

“Indivisible”

A message from our president

**A Lesbian on a Mission:
Stephanie Preston-Hughes and the Central
Florida Conversion Therapy Ban**

**A Place at the Blackboard for
Everyone:
Fostering a Supportive Learning
Environment for LGBTGEQIAP+ Students**

**Peer Based Support: A Place of
Refuge for Teens**

**Supporting Trans Students
From the American College Counseling
Association**

Member Publications



Meet ALGBTIC News Magazine

We hope you are as excited as we are about the introduction of our news magazine, ALGBTIC News Magazine! I mean, we must face it, newsletters are soooooooooo 2018 – am I right?? We hope you enjoy receiving this quarterly digital publication in your inboxes!

What might be contained in this magazine? Glad you asked ☺

To start off with, we will be hoping to organize a few stories around a specific theme for the issue. For the current issue, the theme is “Politics and Policy.” We had some members contribute some insights and articles, as well as shared some newer publications they coauthored.

Going forward - we'd love to include pictures of ANY events where ALGBTIC members are gathering, sharing, learning, and having fun are always welcome!!

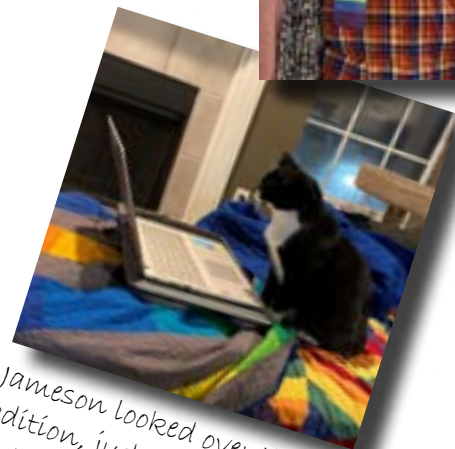
Why contribute to our magazine you may ask? Well – first it will help us keep in touch with what is going on in our various communities. How are we to know the amazing things you are doing if you don't contribute and let us know??? We want to celebrate what you have done and communicate the awesome things our members do! We need your help to make this magazine more than just a pretty image, we need you to help make this

a meaningful communication tool for all of our members. So please, contribute!!!

If you are interested in contributing to our magazine – email the ALGBTIC News Magazine editor, Joe Currin at joe.currin@ttu.edu. We look forward to hearing about all the amazing things our members are up to!!

Next quarter's theme will be “Intersectionality.”

Enjoy our first edition!!
Joe Currin, PhD, LP
he/his/him
Texas Tech University
Editor



Jameson looked over the first edition, judged it, and I'm not quite sure if he approved...



Call for Journal Submissions

The Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling Advocacy and Social Justice for LGBTGEQIAP+

Guest Co-Editors:

Jared S. Rose, PhD, LPCC-S(OH), NCC, EMDRC

Robin DuFresne, PhD, LPCC(OH), NCC, ACS

Call for Papers

The Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC), a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA) is inviting submissions for our next special issue of the Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling. This issue will focus on advocacy and social justice for LGBTGEQIAP+. The intent of this special issue is to provide relevant information 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 agencies, and colleges and universities, as well as to individuals working in fields of public health, advocacy, public policy or other areas particularly focused on LGBTGEQIAP+ social justice and advocacy efforts. The issue will be published around December 2020.

Submissions should be related to working with the LGBTGEQIAP+ communities, specifically focused on advocacy and social justice. Submissions surrounding issues pertinent to the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, gender-identity, age, ability, spirituality/religion, mental health, and other attributes that contribute to a person's identity and overall wellness are particularly sought. This journal welcomes the submission of manuscripts that reflect our special focus and are pertinent to the advocacy of sexual, affectional, intersex, and gender expansive identities, and should focus in one of the following areas: (1) new research in the field of counseling, (2) introduction of new techniques or innovation in service delivery within the counseling field, (3) introduction of new and innovative techniques for advocacy and/or social justice, or (4) theoretical or conceptual pieces that reflect new ideas or new ways of integrating previously held ideas. The deadline for submissions is 5:00 pm EST, May 15, 2020.

All manuscripts are submitted electronically through Scholar One, the portal for our publisher, Taylor & Francis, at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wlco20/current>. Please click on the "Submit" tab to find both the "Guidelines for Authors" and the "Submit Online" tabs to guide you in your submission process. You will be able to identify your submission as for the special issue in the process of submitting your manuscript online.

From the President...

INDIVISIBLE

*“Oh
Great
Spirit
who made
all races, look
kindly upon the
whole human family
and take away the ar-
rogance and hatred which
separates us from our sib-
lings.”
- Cherokee prayer*



Misty M. Ginicola, Ph.D., LPC,
CA-RYT-200
She/Her/Hers

This quote has been on my signature line in my email for almost a decade. When I was asked to write an article for our magazine on leadership and the direction of my presidency, I knew that if you are to understand my perspective, you must also know a little of my story and why unity has become my life work.

As a young child, I was always interested in differences. Growing up as a child of a father of Native and English descent and an English,

Irish, and German mother, I could see that they were incredibly different in almost all perceptible ways. My father had a calm, silent, warm demeanor – much akin to a calm stream of water; and my mother had (and still has) a fiery, bubbling, pertinacious personality – more akin to a lava eruption. Being part of both of them brought me confusion as to how this intersection expressed itself within me, and where I actually fit into our world. As I grew older, I became more aware of differences as I realized my gender was variant and I was bisexual. Growing up in a conservative and disaffirming religious environment, I also was aware of how many people perceived differences in a negative way. When my brother came out as gay, I saw the rejection and struggles that he experienced. Although I did not feel that I could speak to the adults in my life about my own affectional and gender identity, since I graduated high school at a young age, I was able to find a more affirming environment at college with my peers.

With all of the different elements of my background, and with the experiences I have had, I began to feel like a misfit within any environment. I was not Native OR White, I was not gay OR heterosexual, I was not completely female OR male, I was a young kid around college students, and I considered myself smart but was very sheltered. As a survivor of sexual assault and religious-based trauma, I also found that it was difficult to truly and authentically open up to others. I was, as all of us are, an intersectional being with numerous identities and lived experiences. I was always fearing rejection and the inevitable pain that accompanies it.

After counseling, finding a community, and furthering my education, a lot of things definitely got better; but I admit, that I still commonly felt like a misfit. Being bisexual, I was not always welcomed into the queer community. Even in my doctorate program, I felt out of place, as a kid who grew up poor, biracial, bisexual, genderqueer, and a first-generation college student.

When I began to be more connected with my Native ancestry, I learned about Two-Spirit communities. Native culture, prior to colonization, recognized variant gender and affectional identities as a blessing to the tribe and

would celebrate when they discovered a Two-Spirit person among them. These individuals were seen as blessed with both a masculine and feminine spirit within them, a perfect harmony of gender, and took a respected place within each tribe. Although each tribe had different terms for these identities, these individuals were seen as socially and spiritually gifted; a blend of the divine masculine and feminine, they were able to view issues from multiple perspectives. In indigenous society, we were respected leaders, spiritual advisors, and caretakers of children, elderly, and the infirm. This began to change my perspective on being a misfit; Being a misfit was our gift; we were the remedy that this world needed.

Although the label of two-spirit is restricted to those with indigenous heritage, I believe the spirituality surrounding two-spirit philosophy is true for all of us who are part of the Queer and Trans community.

Recent research has actually supported this philosophy; we are born with higher social and emotional skills, higher levels of empathy, and a higher capacity for leadership. We ARE misfits in a broken world; and we are meant to bring about healing to our families, our communities, and our culture.

Now, as a professor, a Licensed Professional Counselor, a practicing yogi, and a parent to a son with sensory processing sensitivity and a trans daughter, I no longer feel like being a misfit is negative – I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that my true purpose on this earth is inextricably related to my affectional and gender identity, as well as all of my other intersectional identities and lived experiences. I am all of these things united, no one identity less significant than the others.

However, along the way, we have often experienced trauma and rejection in a world that no longer respects our blessed presence. As a result, this trauma can keep us from approaching the world with a completely open heart. We lose our perspective and our connection to our collective wisdom of our heritage. We can very easily turn against other marginalized people or our allies, or even those within the queer community. Just because we understand our own



marginalization, does not mean we understand other's experiences, particularly when it is related to our own privilege. People of color, transgender persons, bisexuals/pansexuals, asexuals, and people with non-binary gender identities have often reported feeling unwelcome in queer communities.

Uniting all our communities, not only aligns us in purpose, it brings us back to our roots of who we truly are as blessed gifts to this culture. We are healers, and the world around us, needs us, so very much right now.

My love for our communities also includes our bountiful allies. I have seen, first-hand, the penalties that our allies face – not only from outside our communities, but sometimes within our communities as well. It is hard to balance your privilege, learn about others' experiences of marginalization, use your privilege to ally effectively and consistently, and balance using your voice with cultural humility.

Knowing a little of my story now, it should be no surprise that in my presidential year, our theme is "Indivisible." This word to me, in terms of our organization, means that when we become united in purpose, when all of our voices are heard and valued, when we connect with our wisdom keepers, and we revisit our mission and values for our organization, we will be truly united in purpose.

To accomplish this, ALGBTIC is undergoing a strategic plan. A strategic plan will allow us to create the strongest organization possible for all of the community in which we serve. It will allow us to redefine and clarify who we would like to be as an organization, as counselors who work with LGBTGEQIAP+ people, as Queer and Trans counselors, and as leaders within our parent organization – American Counseling Association, as well as leaders within the mental health field.

"Strategic planning should be more about collective wisdom building than top-down or bottom-up planning." – W. Chan Kim

In order to form our strategic plan, I have formed a committee that represents our collective wisdom and voices; I was very purposeful in inviting those voices to our committee that may have not always been heard in our organization: particularly Queer and Trans People of Color, non-binary affectional and gender identities,

and asexual persons. I also want to us to connect to our wisdom keepers, so I have set up an Advisory Board of Past Presidents and have asked our Queer and Trans People of Color Committee to serve as an advisory board for us as well. You have also, no doubt, as a member, received emails from me and other members of the Board asking you to share your wisdom and perspectives on how we need to grow our organization.

One of my heroes, Wilma Mankiller, said, "I want to be remembered as the person who helped us restore faith in ourselves." I want to bring this message to our community. We are not broken. We are not flawed, immoral, disordered, or problematic. We are perfect, and beautiful, and blessed gifts to this world. Let us not be bogged down by the problems that we are here to fix. Let us liberate ourselves, take back our power, and take our rightful place as the healers, the leaders, the advocates, and the protectors. Let us help future generations of our community never have to grow up in a world where their worth is questioned. Let us pave a world where they – and others – know that they are the solution for exactly what is wrong with this world. And the only way we can achieve this – is to hear all of our collective wisdom and work united in purpose.

Let us work towards our new organizational vision, written collectively by our members, elders, strategic plan committee, and our Board:

"A world where LGBTGEQIAP+ people are respected, celebrated, and experience belonging."

I look forward to meeting with all of you, hearing your voices, and gaining the wisdom that you all have within you.



A Lesbian On a Mission:

Stephanie Preston-Hughes and the Central Florida Conversion Therapy Ban



There is no empirical evidence supporting sexual orientation change efforts, often called conversion or reparative therapy (Gamboni, Gutierrez, & Morgan-Sowada, 2018). Furthermore, the American Counseling Association (1998), National Association of Social Workers (2000), and the American Psychological Association (2009) have all crafted policy positions denouncing conversion and reparative therapies by their members. In fact, the Pan-American Health Organization, a regional office of the World Health Organization, states conversion or reparative therapies have no basis and infringe on the human rights of those affected (PAHOW-HO, 2012). Even though conversion and reparative therapies are recognized by national mental health organizations as without scientific merit and harmful, the practice is still legal in most of the United States. Currently, the practice of conversion and/or reparative therapies are banned in 18 states (NJ, CA, OR, IL, VT, NM, CT, RI, NV, WA, HI, DE, MD, NH, NY, MA, CO, and ME), D.C. and Puerto Rico, and in 55 various municipalities and counties located in Arizona, Wisconsin, Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. So obviously, with much of the nation still allowing these types of harmful services to be offered as “therapy,” we have much to do in protecting all of our LGBTGEQIAO+ family.

One person leading the charge in Orlando/Orange County to ban conversion therapy is ACA and ALGBTIC member Stephanie Preston-Hughes of Orange Counseling. We were able to catch up with Stephanie online to ask some questions and get

perspectives on how her fight to ban conversion/reparative therapies is going and lessons she can pass on to us.

A-NEWS: So what has the timeline looked like for the conversion therapy ban?

Stephanie: More slowly than we thought but steady and organized. We wanted to have the ordinance passed in September 2019, but it is now looking more like December 2019 or January 2020 when it will be voted on. However long you think something is going to take, it will take much longer. We first met with Orange County Mayor (Jerry Demings), his chief of staff and legal aides in July 2019. We next scheduled individual meetings with each of the county commissioners in August 2019. We then offered public comment during the September 2019 Board of County Commissioners meeting. At our most recent meeting on September 30th, the county officials said they would not be moving forward with anything until a judge issues a ruling on a challenge to a similar ordinance that was passed in another municipality. With things involving lawyers, I have there is a lot of sitting and waiting for other people’s cases to be decided before moving forward. It seems that places prefer to be the second to do something legally rather than to be the first test case.

A-NEWS: What have been some of the unexpected challenges?

Stephanie: More slowly than we thought but steady and organized. We wanted to have the

ordinance passed in September 2019, but it is now looking more like December 2019 or January 2020 when it will be voted on. However long you think something is going to take, it will take much longer. Someone who we counted as a yes vote and who used to be a licensed mental health professional turned out to be lukewarm at best when we with her one on one. She agrees with the CT ban, but is worried about losing votes of constituents who will perceive this as an attack on their religious freedom.

Two ex-gay Pulse survivors and a national organization which supports conversation therapy organized an ex-gay “Freedom March” in downtown Orlando in September 2019. They did not specifically say it was in response to our CT ban efforts, but we feel clear that it was. Also, a privately funded legal organization (Liberty Counsel) with deep pockets is fighting conversion therapy bans in almost every municipality, county, and state where they are being passed. This is the main reason things are moving so slowly. Every step our local lawmakers take is taken slow and intentional with the expectation that LC will file suit. It feels frustrating that one private organization can wield so much power.

A-NEWS: How have you been able to overcome these challenges and bring others into the fight?

Stephanie: Connecting with allies who have a positive reputation in the community has been extremely important. In Orange County that has been particularly true of faith leaders. They attended the meetings with our individual county commissioners and spoke of the importance of protecting LGBTGEQIAO+ youth. There has been lots of cashing in on statements from people who said, “Please let me know how I can help” after the Pulse tragedy happened. We have gone back and asked people to speak up and stand with us.

A-NEWS: What advice would you offer members about this type of effort?

Stephanie: First, LANGUAGE MATTERS! We are now trying to use the phrases “protection for minors” and “conversion therapy ordinances” instead of “ban on conversion therapy.” Secondly,

elected officials rely on their constituents to educate them more than I realized. In the 30 minute meetings we schedule with 5 of our 6 county commissioners, we provided leave behind packets and gave them important scientific information that they would have not otherwise gotten. Thirdly, getting involved in advocacy is a crash course in how your local municipal governments work. In terms of principles, processes, and personalities. You will realize how much you don’t know and how complicated it is to get things done. Being an elected official is more difficult than I realized.

A-NEWS: What have you learned from this process?

Stephanie: Two things. One is to be humble and open to learning. Our group has found that the most success has been focusing on implementing a conversion therapy ban for minors, even though we would prefer it to be a total ban. Sometimes compromise gets you one step forward, even though two would have felt better. The other is that Getting involved in advocacy issues that you are passionate about can build your business. An unexpected aspect of my advocacy work has been an increase in my private practice. People I meet for the first time ask for my business cards and tell me they know someone who could benefit from meeting with me.

A-NEWS: You just described yourself as “a lesbian on a mission!” What motivates you to be on this mission?

Stephanie: Affirmative counseling saved my life in 1992. When I was in my first year of college and living three hours away from home, I participated in the first ever GLB support group at my undergraduate institution. I knew I was gay since age 13 but had not come out until age 18. I met other people like me for the first time in my life. In retrospect, I don’t think I was clinically depressed, just lonely, scared, and in need of community. I came out in college more than 25 years ago in the early 1990’s during the height of AIDS crisis. I grew up in a small Ohio town and attended school at Wright State University just a few hours from home. At that time being diagnosed with HIV/AIDS was considered a death sentence. The fear of LGBTGEQIAO+ people was exacerbated as a result.

“If you are not invited to the table, invite yourself and bring a folding chair.”

A-NEWS: What makes this work so important to you?

Stephanie: I believe in the power of positive LGBTQ role models being out and visible in our communities. I want for young people to see someone who looks like them stand up and say that they are beautiful, they are loved, and they are not alone. I never want another queer kid to feel as emotionally isolated as I did growing up.

A-NEWS: Tell us a little about you!

Stephanie: I've been married to my wife (Elizabeth Preston-Hughes) since November 2017. We love taking care of our rescue dogs Max and Smokey. I've been clean and sober since 2010. I am active in my twelve step recovery home group which has become a second family to me. I attend weekly silent worship meetings at the Quakers of Orlando. Distance running is my best stress relief. I am currently training for two local half-marathons. the Disney Wine & Dine Half Marathon in November 2019 and then OUC Orlando Half Marathon in December 2019.

A-NEWS: Any advice for those students reading that are preparing to graduate?

Stephanie: Don't be afraid to initiate communication with people who are older than you already working in the field. I LOVE meeting ea- ger young clinicians and mentoring people. It's a win-win situation. If you are not invited to the table, invite yourself and bring a folding chair.

Exciting Update!!! Since this interview, Stephanie and her team have moved the protections for minors from conversion and reparative therapies to the Florida Statehouse!! (Pictured above are Stephanie with Florida State Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez)



Did you miss a webinar???

Was there a topic you wanted to learn about but couldn't get free?? We got you covered!

We now have **ALGBTIC Online Learning!**

Take our online courses and earn CE Credit through the National Board of Certified Counselors. ALGBTIC has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP #1027). Courses are available for 90 days and once completed, will award you a CE Certificate.

We will be adding courses each month so check back for new materials! Members can take the on-line courses for a reduced cost of just \$20, and you earn 2 CE credits.

For more informaiton, check out our webpage: <https://algbtic.org/online-courses/>



A Place at the Blackboard for Everyone:

Fostering a Supportive Learning Environment for LGBTGEQIAP+ Students

*Clark D. Ausloos, MA, LPC, LPSC, NCC,
(he/his/him), The University of Toledo*



The State of Our Schools

As we enter the Fall months, many families breathe a sigh of relief that students are back in school, bringing a sense of routine and normalcy to parents' lives. Some students themselves long for school, to see friends, and put an end to summer boredom. However, this is not the case for many of our students with diverse affective, sexual and gender identities. In fact, many students in schools who identify within the LGBTGEQIAP+ communities face persistent marginalization, discrimination, physical abuse and assault, and overt and covert microaggressions (Bryan, 2018; Kosciw et al., 2018). While students report many of these actions are demonstrated by their peers, many diverse students speak to direct discrimination from educators, staff and even school administration. Additionally, students with intersecting identities (i.e., trans* POC, or trans* persons with disabilities) face increased stress, resulting in increased negative physical and mental health disparities. Students with expansive affective and gender identities often face homelessness resulting in poverty, and struggle with substance use disorders. It is no wonder why these marginalized students may seem hesitant in returning to school.

School counselors, educators, and school administration are positioned in a way to provide support and foster inclusive environments, but the reality is that often, they are not (Kosciw et al., 2018). With

ever-changing legislature that directly affects affective and gender-diverse youth, unclear school policies, and uncomfortable and incompetent school staff, the unique needs of this vulnerable population are not being met. The following section of this brief article will provide clear, pragmatic strategies for professional counselors, both school and clinical, school administration, educators and school staff for working with affective and gender-diverse youth in an affirming and celebratory way (Singh & Jackson, 2012).

Professional Counselors

As language and terminology continues to evolve, it is imperative professional counselors stay abreast of trends and always strive for affirming and inclusive language versus stigmatizing and pathologizing terms. A caveat to this is when a student identifies with terminology that you may not use. Learn from your students, ask them what names and pronouns they use, ask them what their identity means to them. Ultimately, respect the terminology that they want you to use. An example of using affirming language is using “non-dominant identities” instead of “minorities”; and “gender non-conforming” vs “gender-expansive”. Resources at the end of this article provide some examples of terminology in flux, and terms that are strength-based and affirming.

Understand that we all have biases and all live in a gendered world together. It is important to be

compassionate and forgiving of yourself as you work with those that are different (and maybe not so different) from you. If you make a mistake with a student, being direct and clear with an apology, and, through action, making amends models a process of awareness, understanding, and growth.

Students with strong parental support have higher life satisfaction and lower levels of depression and suicidality. This is important to know when working with families, in providing sensitive support, balancing student and family concerns. Often, brief psychoeducation is warranted for parents who sometimes lack basic understanding between sex, gender and affective orientation (Durwood, McLaughlin, & Olsen, 2017; Goodrich et al., 2013).

Important interventions for professional counselors includes advocating for equitable access to activities, school functions, and school-wide change to policies; providing education and workshops to school staff and administration; developing responsive LGBTGEQIAP+-focused bullying prevention programs and empowering students to advocate for themselves to be their authentic selves (Asplund & Orway, 2018; Bemak & Chung, 2008).

Creating a safety plan with students that assesses protective and risk factors, anticipates potential crises, develops strategies to address these situations and prevents further crisis, and includes a detailed plan of action of how to proceed during an emergency (Rise Project Coordination Care Team Program Manual, 2016).

Educators and Staff

Teachers should model affirming and positive attitudes towards LGBTGEQIAP+ students and issues, provide prompt and strict responses to harassment and bullying of LGBTGEQIAP+ students in classrooms, and be aware of and be intentional in shifting gendered language

They also need to promote diversity in class examples and in wording of class content, creating visibility for students, and providing positive representations of LGBTGEQIAP+ students in coursework School Administration and Policies. It is important that educators and staff create, implement and maintain clear bullying, harassment, and anti-discrimination policies that address affective and sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Staff and educators must respect and honor identities, names, and pronouns of students; and

working on school records to include students' authentic names (vs. legal name) when required, determine a balance of what information is needed to share with students' parents and guardians, and how the student will be addressed in school.

Ultimately, schools should have connections with resources within the community for referrals to mental health services, medical providers and support groups and parental supports.

The Future

While the aforementioned strategies are not at all exhaustive, it is imperative we continue constant learning, seeking professional development opportunities, reflect on our own biases and strongly-held stereotypes, and continue advocacy within our schools, our communities and at legislative levels. Increased competence and confidence in working with LGBTGEQIAP+ students in schools will lead to better academic performance, school success, and positive physical, mental and social health outcomes for these students. It is my sincere hope that someday students of all identities will look forward to the leaves falling, the end of summer, and will run passionately in the school doors, with open arms welcoming them, offering a place at the blackboard for everyone.

Helpful National Resources

CenterLink (<https://www.lgbtcenters.org/>): This organization provides networking, technical assistance and training, and capacity building services.

GLAAD (<https://www.glaad.org/>): This organization works with news and entertainment media of all formats and communications and digital strategy outlets to ensure the public is provided with powerful stories about the LGBTQ community that advocates for greater equality.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (<https://www.glsen.org/>): GLSEN's mission is to ensure every member of school communities feel respected, regardless of their sexual orientation. This is accomplished through educating teachers, students and the public about the common pressures faced by LGBTQ students and working to remove barriers to success.

Human Rights Campaign (<https://www.hrc.org/>): The organization is focused on making true equality for all possible. The organization has a number of research

publications outlining equality indexes on areas such as healthcare, employers, states and corporations.

National Center for Transgender Equality (<https://transequality.org/>): NCTE works at the federal, state and local levels to leverage political capital and change laws encouraging discriminatory behavior. The organization has a particularly helpful “Know Your Rights” section of their website with information on housing, healthcare, employment, and more.

National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (<https://www.the-taskforce.org/>): NGLTF focuses on building the political capital of the LGBTQ community through activist training, advancing pro-LGBT legislation and raising the profile of LGBTQ interests and causes. The organization is also an excellent resource for learning about the beliefs and platforms of those running for public office in regard to LGBTQ interests.

PFLAG (<https://pflag.org/>): PFLAG seeks to unite the LGBTQ community with friends, families and allies. By doing so, the organization hopes to further equality efforts and lessen discriminatory practices. Currently, there are more than 350 chapters and over 200,000 members.

The Attic Youth Center (<https://www.atticyouthcenter.org/>): This organization is an excellent example of how LGBTQ youth centers can empower and inspire local teens that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning. Some of the services offered include life skills, mental health counseling, supportive programs, community engagement, and social activities.

Gay Straight Alliance Networks (<https://gsanetwork.org/>): GSAs are student run clubs operating in both high school and middle schools that provide support, socialization, and activism activities for LGBTQ youth. The overarching goal is to fight against homophobia and transphobia; providing leadership and activist training for group members and encouraging them to advocate for nondiscriminatory policies and greater equality.

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth and Student Organization (<https://www.iglyo.com/>): IGLYO is an organization focused on representing the interests of LGBTQ youth. To ac-

complish this mission, the organization hosts conferences, provides educational materials, and offers the general public many opportunities to get involved.

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Supporting Trans Students

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The American Counseling Association Code of Ethics C.5. Non-discrimination states that “Counselors do not condone or engage in discrimination against prospective or current clients, students, employees, supervisees, or research participants based on age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/ partnership status, language preference, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or any basis proscribed by law” (p. 9). Therefore, it is crucial for counselors to recognize their ethical responsibility and duty to foster an open, safe, and supportive environment for trans students equal to their cisgender (i.e., those whose birth sex is congruent with their gender identity) peers.

Students identifying as trans are those whose sex assigned at birth is not congruent with their gender with which they identify. Initially this incongruence may manifest itself internally with thoughts and feelings that indicate incongruence between assigned sex at birth (and the expectations and social roles that the culture identifies) and their own gender identity, which frequently causes a great deal of psychological discord, pain and confusion. One of the first steps to relieve such pain is coming out to oneself, close and trusted friends, and/or family as trans. While some individuals will identify with a male or female gender identity, many will identify with a third gender or a non-binary gender, expanding past the conventional expectations of a binary male-female gender. This may be followed

by a social transition, which may include the use of a more gender consistent name, dressing in more gender consistent clothes, and connecting with both other trans individuals and the larger LGBTQ+ community. They may additionally seek a legal transition, having their name or gender marker on their documents legally changed; however, they may not live in a state that allows for such changes. For some trans persons, they may wish to change not only their gender expression, but to alleviate body dysphoria they may use binding garments, prosthetics, hormones and other medical procedures to affirm their gender within their primary and secondary sex characteristics (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005).

Students who identify as trans face the same challenges as their cisgender peers (Swanbrow Becker, et al., 2017) such as the transition to the college experience and context as well as new financial academic pressures. In addition, trans students face unique issues related to navigating gender identity, gender-based discrimination, as well as emotional and physical health (Swanbrow Becker, et. al., 2017), all of which may result in a feeling or climate of oppression which can impact academic performance and social support, and have long-term effects on identity development (Newhouse, 2013). Examples of gender identity-based discrimination students may experience include the difference between their chosen name and their birth name, which is often the name

used on official records and class rosters with no easy or identified process to change this (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015) as well as the frequent limitations of binary pronouns (e.g., man/woman or female/male) typically used on formal and informal documents. Other examples of gender-based discrimination include gendered only restrooms as well as gendered double occupancy dorm rooms which may result in transgender students feeling misidentified, uncomfortable and/or unsafe (Goldberg, 2018).

These findings further indicate the complicated nature of mental health issues for trans students. Fortunately, Swanbrow Becker and colleagues (2017) found that transgender students are more likely to seek counseling services than cisgender students. All of this together demonstrates how critical it is for college counseling centers and their staff to educate themselves on the needs of trans students and therapeutic models and interventions which have shown to be helpful in counseling, which include trauma informed care, transaffirming cognitive-behavioral practices, person-centered therapy during the coming out process, and group therapy (Swanbrow Becker, et al., 2017). The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) has also developed a “Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and GenderNonconforming People” resource, which include competencies and roles of mental health professionals working with individuals with these identities (Coleman, et al., 2012).

It is not enough for counseling centers to provide therapeutic services to support trans students, they must collaborate with on campus partners (e.g. health services, student services, LGBTQ+ resource centers, disability services, residence life) and off campus partners (e.g. LGBTQ+ community centers, women’s centers, support groups, as well as specialized mental and physical health providers if/when they are available) to foster an environment of support for students as well as transgender faculty, staff, and administrators (Couture, 2017). This is often done by working together to provide and promote campus and community resources, engaging in outreach in the form of educational, prevention, and health promotion programs, and policy development. One program that is often used to help colleges and universities to get educated in developing and providing a supportive atmosphere and may serve as a foun-

ation for resource, program, and policy development is The Safe Zone Project. The Project offers some free online resources as well as on-campus trainings designed to create opportunities to learn about LGBTQ+ identities, gender and sexuality, and examine prejudice, assumptions, and privilege and to increase familiarity and comfort with vocabulary, inclusive practices, and how privilege can help you identify ways that your institution can continue to be a more safe and inclusive space for LGBTQ+ students (source). Individuals who have completed a Safe Zone training are given stickers to display which indicates to LGBTQ+ students that an officer and/or a person is truly a safe space.

As we look at other elements of identity, there are some of note that may have even more unique needs or barriers. For example, transgender student military members may be experiencing distress due to restrictions placed on one’s ability to serve based on a diagnosis of gender dysphoria as well as gender identity and expression through the National Defense Authorization Act. The NDAA was recently amended to reduce barriers and increase inclusiveness as it relates to opportunities to serve. Trans homeless students frequently what Sheldon (2018) calls a false divide of “us” (housed) and “them” (homeless) which counselors may help address through increased empathetic interactions. In addition, trans homeless students often experience discrimination when attempting to obtain shelter. For example, recent proposals by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allows shelters to force transgender women to sleep in quarters with men and share male bathrooms (24 C.F.R. 5). In 2017, HUD withdrew policy proposals requiring HUD-funded emergency shelters to post notices regarding the rights and protections of transgender individuals. Both examples demonstrate the importance of counseling centers staying informed on both laws and policies that impact trans students.

Transgender students of color are a particularly socially vulnerable group who often must navigate through intersecting transphobia and racism (Singh, 2013). Physical and mental health care may help these students navigate these intersecting issues; however, these services may be difficult to access, due partially to lack of knowledge and lack of culturally competent providers (Bith-Melander, et al. 2010). Reinforcing the need to counseling centers to fill in this gap in services. According to Singh (2013), transgender students of color benefit from a resiliency strategy that includes advocat-

ing for oneself and making positive changes in one's environment. Therefore, one way that counseling centers can advocate for clients is by helping them learn ways to advocate for themselves when facing discrimination as well as connecting them with emotional support groups that foster a more positive environment. Therapeutically working on self-esteem bolstering, managing relationships, and dealing with transitional issues can also be particularly beneficial for not only transgender students of color, but all trans students (Bith-Melander, et al, 2010). Resources such as the True Inclusion Toolbox for providers, through the True Color Fund, can assist college counselors in understanding how to support these students in advocating for themselves and knowing their rights.

This piece is designed as an introduction to issues and needs of trans students, therapeutic modalities and interventions that have been found to be helpful working with individuals and even small groups, as well as ideas and resources that may help counseling centers work with on and off-campus partners to develop an inclusive, supportive, and safe space which is critical to the success of trans students.

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Recent Publications by Members

LGBTQ-Affirmative Career Counseling: An Intersectional Perspective

Megan Speciale, Palo Alto University &
Mark Scholl, Wake Forest University

The authors demonstrate the utility of LGBTQ affirmative career counseling model by applying the model to the case of a client with multiple marginalized identities. The case illustrates the dynamic relationships among the client's cultural identities and sociopolitical environments. The idiographic career counseling process highlights: (a) identification and support of the client's strengths through use of the Strengths Inventory and (b) use of story crafting to construct a narrative describing an attainable future.

Speciale, M., & Scholl, M.B. (2019). LGBTQ-affirmative career counseling: An intersectional perspective. *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal*, 35(1), 22-35. Access the article via this link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333456514_LGBTQ-Affirmative_Career_Counseling_An_Intersectional_Perspective

Nonsequential Task Model of Bi/Pan/Polysexual Identity Development

Amney J. Harper & Renae Swanson, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

The article provides a thorough review of the existing literature regarding identity development of bisexual people. It answers the call of the critiques and limitations of existing models and introduces a model that is a non-sequential, task-oriented, process model. This model provides a tool for counselors and individuals to conceptualize the identity development of bisexual, pansexual, and polysexual people in a more layered/complex way. It specifically addresses intersectionality as well as understanding the whole person in the context of their environment.

Harper, A.J., & Swanson, R. (2019). Nonsequential task model of bi/pan/polysexual identity develop-

ment. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 19(3), 337-360. Access via the link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/15299716.2019.1608614>

Navigating Disclosure of Sexual Minority Identity for Men in Socio-politically Conservative Areas

Joseph M. Currin, Texas Tech University
Randolph D. Hubach, Hunter J. Meyers, Kyle Deboy, Zachary Giano, & Denna L. Wheeler, Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences

Previous models of sexual minority orientation identity development have theorized disclosure of current orientation as important in accepting one's sexual minority identity. Furthermore, research into disclosure of sexual orientation highlights positive outcomes for disclosure and negative outcomes for concealment of sexual minority identity. These models, however, fail to incorporate the socio-cultural context of the individual. Using a grounded theory approach, we conducted 40 interviews with individuals who identified with a sexual minority identity living in rural areas in Oklahoma, a primarily socio-politically conservative state in the U.S. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached. Three main themes were identified by participants in regards to navigating disclosure of sexual orientation: (1) assessment of consequences to disclosure; (2) situational disclosure of sexual orientation; and (3) disclosure of current sexual orientation. Rural sexual minority men navigate disclosing their sexual orientation by considering the socio-cultural environment where they live and the acceptance and/or rejection of important individuals in their lives. This consideration demonstrates the importance of considering disclosure as a step in sexual minority identity development, not actual disclosure of sexual minority identity. A preliminary model of navigating disclosure is proposed and implications are discussed.

Currin, J.M., Hubach, R.D., Meyers, H.J., Deboy, K., Giano, Z., & Wheeler, D.L. (2019). Navigating disclosure of sexual minority identity for men in socio-politically conservative areas. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, Advanced Online Publication. Access via the link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19359705.2019.1655511>

Peer-Based Support: A Place of Refuge for Teens



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In a private meeting room at a local coffee house in Southwest Virginia, a group of teens gathers twice a month. They come from a variety of backgrounds, with diversity in affectional and gender identities making up the thread that draws them together. The group is called “Youth SAGA of Roanoke” (SAGA = Sexuality and Gender Alliance) – a peer-based support group for LGBTGEQIAP+ youth ages 12-18.

Youth SAGA of Roanoke was founded ten years ago to meet an important need in rural southwest Virginia. Young people who identified differently from their peers needed a safe and supportive space to meet and share about their lives. They needed a space they could count on twice a month to come and just be themselves, judgement-free. They needed a space to gather and be sure or unsure of how they identified – and either would be okay and accepted. They needed a space to try out using a new name and pronouns that felt more aligned with who they felt they were inside.

The leadership of Youth SAGA of Roanoke includes a team of five volunteer facilitators, all with a background in mental health training and/or working supportively with youth. In an interview with one of the facilitators, H Smith, they discussed the strengths and challenges of leading this type of support group. H volunteers their time with the group in the midst of completing a rigorous graduate program in Counselor Education at Virginia Tech.

When asked about the most valuable aspects of the group, H reflected, “Because of the lack of mental health, healthcare, educational, and social resources for LGBTGEQIAP+ youth in rural regions, Youth SAGA fills an important need for social connection.” Isolation and loneliness is all-too-easy to experience in

rural regions, especially when a teenager already feels different from their peers. “In regions such as Southwest Virginia, diverse affectional and gender identities are often marginalized through the norms and values of rural culture. The lack of multicultural resources and education combined with an oppositional climate creates an environment where LGBTGEQIAP+ youth are taught that their identities are not a priority, or furthermore, should be hidden.” Having a bi-monthly opportunity to meet other teens who are going through similar social struggles, family dynamics, and challenges in school is a crucial outlet.

H also reflected on the value of using a peer-based support model for leading this type of group. “The peer-based model emphasizes the power of the relationship between participants. While often semi-structured through the use of questions or topics generated by participants, the most organic moments stem from unstructured opportunities for the youth to lead discussion and support one another. Participants are encouraged to guide the discussions, enabling the giving and receiving of support, sharing of knowledge, and connection to resources from other youth.”

Yet, there are challenges to leading this type of group as well. “Because this is such a vital and scarce resource, many participants with varying levels of mental health needs are referred to the group. However, the peer-based support group model does not always support the needs of youth who are in need of varying levels of services such as counseling, psychiatric services, or hospitalization.” Having trained volunteers as facilitators has been critical to help connect youth with resources in the community when the support group itself is not sufficient to meet their mental health needs.

Interested in starting a group like Youth SAGA in your community? Begin by considering your area's culture and climate, familiarize yourself with local resources such as LGBTGEQIAP-friendly practitioners (e.g., medical doctors, counselors), and identify safe spaces that may potentially serve as meeting spots. Safety and confidentiality are important concerns when working with youth, and particularly for youth who are marginalized and potentially vulnerable. Because youth are not always "out" to family members, public spaces that offer private meeting rooms are ideal – e.g. coffee houses, public libraries, or similar locations where youth could gather organically.

Consider collaboration with allied school counselors, administrators, and community stakeholders to help market the group and share information about events.

One of the many benefits of volunteering time and energy to a group like Youth SAGA is the heartwarming feeling of watching youth validate each other. It is the process of youth seeing each other for who they are and in turn, being seen authentically. It is the moment when a transgender young woman of color asks her fellow group members what they see when they look at her... and hearing them respond "a beautiful, strong woman." It is watching her beam with pride and glow with recognition in response. These are the transformational moments that we are honored and humbled to witness as co-facilitators of Youth SAGA of Roanoke.



Questions? Contact Laura at laurabfarmer@gmail.com (left) and H at hsmith@vt.edu (below) to learn more about Youth SAGA of Roanoke on our Facebook page.

