EMPOWERING
LGBTQIA+
YOUTH

Session II
By: Terry Scraggins (He/Him)

• Discussed gender, ages we began to notice
• Overrepresentation of POC, LGBTQIA+ youth in care
• Coming out Activity
• Intersectionality
• Microaggressions
• Transgender community
• Conversion therapy
• My own personal experiences

QUICK RECAP FROM LAST SESSION:
QUICK Recap From Last Session (Cont’d):

- What resonated from you in the previous session?

TRIGGER WARNING:

- Topics discussed in this session and next could potentially be triggering. If needed, feel free to remove yourself as needed.
- The second session will still be heavy-hearted, but primarily solution-focused (hooray!)
Upon completing this session, participants (Y’all,) will be able to:

- Have an enhanced understanding of potential mental health implications regarding LGBTQ+ youth within the foster care system.
- Have a more confident in understanding of youth who identify LGBTQ+
- Enhance and improve ways to advocate and support LGBTQ+ youth, with emphasis on those identifying within the child welfare system.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- L—Lesbian
- G—Gay
- B—Bisexual
- T—Transgender
- Q—Queer/Questioning
- I—Intersex/In Between
- A—Asexual (sometimes Ally)
- +—All other terms not included in LGBTQIA (i.e., gender non-conforming non-binary, demisexual, etc.)

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/LGBTQIA
**SEX/GENDER TERMS:**

- **Sex-** A term generally used to acknowledge biological differences: Male, Female, Intersex (Medical News Today).
- **Gender-** Socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed (World Health Organization).
- **Gender expression-** External manifestations of gender, expressed through one's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine and feminine changes over time and varies by culture (GLAAD)

[https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/232363.php#sex-differences](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/232363.php#sex-differences)

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**SESSION I WAS ABOUT THE PROBLEM,**

**NOW, WE MOVE TOWARDS SOLUTIONS!**

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WHERE DO WE MOVE FROM HERE?
MY INTERNSHIP IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

MY RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

- HHS should swiftly implement the 2016 Final Rule on AFCARS, including the data elements related to LGBTQ+ youth in foster care. States should begin screening youth, on a voluntary basis, on whether they identify as LGBTQ+. 
MY RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

• Congress must pass the Every Child Deserves a Family Act (S. 1303/H.R. 2640) to ensure more individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ can become foster parents.

MY RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

• Congress should require states to provide training for youth, foster parents and professionals working within the child welfare system on the needs of LGBTQ+ youth in foster care.
SINCE MY INTERNSHIP IN DC,

- I've worked with family equality council to increase awareness regarding the every child deserves a family act
- I've worked with lambda legal to add LGBTQIA+ policies to Idaho’s child welfare standards
- I've lobbied during a legislative session with local Idaho congress members

WHY DID I SHOW YOU THIS?

- If you know any foster youth, encourage them to apply!
- My journey as an activist and an advocate
IMPORTANT BILLS REGARDING LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

- Every child deserves a family act (S. 1303/H.R. 2640)
- Child welfare inclusion act
- Equality act

OK BILL PASSED (OK SENATE BILL 1140)

- allow private adoption agencies to discriminate against L.G.B.T. couples on religious grounds when placing children.
- The law would allow the agencies to choose not to place children in certain homes if it “would violate the agency’s written religious or moral convictions or policies.”
- Oklahoma is the eighth state to pass an adoption agency law like this, said Denise Brogan-Kator, the chief policy officer for the Family Equality Council. “Behind these bills lies an underlying message: We don’t want L.G.B.T.Q. people raising children,” she said.

LGBTQIA+ MENTAL HEALTH

- more than twice as likely as heterosexual adults to experience a mental health condition
- at a higher risk than the general population for suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts
- High school students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are almost five times as likely to attempt suicide compared to their heterosexual peers
- 48% of all transgender adults report that they have considered suicide in the past 12 months, compared to 4% of the overall US population

https://www.nami.org/find-support/lgbtq

LGBTQIA+ MENTAL HEALTH (CONT’D)

- According to the CDC’s 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 60 percent of LGBTQ youth reported being so sad or hopeless they stopped doing some of their usual activities (Kann 2016).
- Basic issues like restroom access have a profound effect on transgender youth well-being. For instance, one study showed that transgender students denied access to genderappropriate facilities on their college campuses were 45 percent more likely to try to take their own lives (Seelman 2016).

MENTAL HEALTH, (CONT’D)

- LGBTQ youth who report having at least one accepting adult were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year.

- Strong family bonds, safe schools and support from caring adults can all protect LGBTQ youth from depression and suicidality (Committee on Adolescence 2013).

- In a study published in the Journal of Child and Psychiatric Nursing, Dr. Caitlin Ryan and colleagues found that LGBTQIA+ youth with affirming families reported higher levels of self-esteem and overall health. Youth with the least accepting families were more than three times as likely to consider and attempt suicide compared to those with highly accepting families (Ryan 2010).

How CAN WE HELP?

- Allyship
- Acknowledging our privilege
- Having more conversations/asking more questions
- Knowing the difference between, and practicing cultural competence and cultural humility
- Practicing acceptance rather than tolerance
- Speaking up
- BE THAT 1 SUPPORTIVE ADULT
HOW CAN WE HELP? (CONT’D)

• Acknowledging and pointing out strengths of intersectionality
• Helping youth navigate resources that could be beneficial
• Understanding and accepting that everyone is on their own journey

THE DANGER OF HIDING WHO YOU ARE
TAKEAWAYS FROM THE VIDEO:

- No, I’m not trying to get anyone to come out
- This is real. Imagine what it feels like to feel like you are hiding from yourself and others?
- Youth in rural areas are possibly likely to feel more trapped than those in metropolitan areas due to resources
Gender pronouns
• Calling in vs. calling out

ALLYSHIP IS A FINE LINE

• Don’t overstep!
  • I.e., asking invasive questions, asking any question without permission, sharing stories with others without permission

ASK QUESTIONS

• If you don’t know the answer and it’s appropriate, be humble and ASK!
• Ask permission to ask a question
• Be transparent
TOLERANCE VS. ACCEPTANCE

- Tolerance sounds like:
  - "Love the sinner, hate the sin"
  - "Dealing with" an individual from a disenfranchised group
  - "Putting up with"

- Acceptance sounds like:
  - "It's okay to be who you are"
  - "You don't have to 'fit-in' with societal norms"
  - "It's okay to have differing characteristics than me"
ADVOCATE/STAND UP FOR YOUTH

- Even when it's uncomfortable.

WAYS EVERYONE CAN ADVOCATE

- Don't make assumptions about people’s sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Speak out against homophobia, transphobia and anti-LGBTQ harassment and discrimination.
- Speak out against the use of antigay slurs.
- Be supportive of anyone who chooses to come out.
- Attend LGBTQ events.
- Read, learn about and discuss LGBTQ issues and the rights of LGBTQ students.
- Wear or display LGBTQ-friendly buttons, stickers or posters.

https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/youth-ally
WAYS CLASSMATES CAN ADVOCATE

- If you witness anti-LGBTQ harassment or discrimination, report it in writing to the school principal.
- Stand up for your LGBTQ friends, and voice your support for their being treated with respect and acceptance.
- Help form a GSA.
- Support friends in their decision to bring a same-sex date to the prom or other social events.
- Advocate for my school to adopt and enforce a nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Request books by LGBTQ authors and about LGBTQ people and issues for the school library.

https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/youth-ally

WAYS FACULTY AND STAFF CAN ADVOCATE

- Make your classroom a safe space where antigay language is not tolerated.
- Advocate for your school to adopt and enforce a nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Request books by LGBT authors and about LGBT people and issues for the school library.
- Consider being an advisor for a GSA.
- Ensure school events include everyone.
- Create an inclusive curriculum that highlights the contributions of LGBT individuals.
- Create displays and/or lesson plans about LGBT History Month.

https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/youth-ally
WAYS PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN ADVOCATE

• Support your children and their friends who question their sexuality or identify as LGBTQ.
• Be available to meet with school faculty or staff about these issues.
• Help your children or their friends file complaints about discrimination or harassment.
• Help organize events like celebrations for LGBTQ History Month.
• Hold your child’s school accountable for violating the school district’s nondiscrimination policy or state laws. To learn about antibullying laws in your state, click here.

https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/youth-ally
Embrace differences  
Help youth see differences as strengths  
Educate on difficult experiences they may encounter
CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Continuum of Cultural Competency

- Cultural Destructiveness: Forced assimilation, subjugation, rights and privileges for dominant groups only.
- Cultural Incapacity: Racism, maintain stereotypes, unfair hiring practices.
- Cultural Blindness: Differences ignored, “treat everyone the same”, only meet needs of dominant groups.
- Cultural Pre-Competence: Explore cultural issues, are committed, assess needs of organization and individuals.
- Cultural Competence: Recognize individual and cultural differences, seek advice from diverse groups, hire culturally unbiased staff.
- Cultural Proficiency: Implement changes to improve services based upon cultural needs.

https://www.premiercontinuingeducation.com/courses/cultural-competence-for-massage-professionals-2ces/lessons/cultural-competence-for-massage-professionals-2ces/

https://www.baylor.edu/diversity/index.php?id=848078

CULTURAL HUMILITY

Moving towards Cultural Humility

- Awareness: Diversity is a description of a community or an environment. Diversity encompasses aspects of many cultures, languages, subcultures, values, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Attitude: Diversity is a description of a community or an environment. Diversity encompasses aspects of many cultures, languages, subcultures, values, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Skills: Intercultural competency is a set of self-awareness and abilities to function within a diverse community. It includes knowledge about one’s own culture, the diversity within a community, and the ability to work within and across communities of difference.
- Practice: Intersectional competency is a set of self-awareness and abilities to function within a diverse community. It includes knowledge about one’s own culture, the diversity within a community, and the ability to work within and across communities of difference.
- Embodiment: Cultural humility is a specific, inclusive practice within a given community. It involves self-awareness, an understanding of one’s own culture and its values, and an openness to engage with others from different cultural backgrounds.
WHICH SHOULD YOU USE?

- There isn’t a correct answer!

ASSUMPTIONS/STEREOTYPES

- Try not to assume
- We all have stereotypes
  - Examples of LGBTQIA+ stereotypes
  - It’s a matter of recognizing our thoughts and altering what we do with our thinking
HELP NAVIGATE RESOURCES

- Educate yourself on local, federal and internet resources for youth you may serve
- Resource List
- Common places to view educational materials
  - Lambda Legal
  - HRC
  - PFLAG

LEARNING OBJECTIVES, REVIEWED

- Do you feel have:
  - an enhanced understanding of potential mental health implications regarding LGBTQ+ youth within the foster care system?
  - a more confident in understanding of youth who identify LGBTQ+
  - an enhanced and improved ways to advocate and support LGBTQ+ youth, with emphasis on those identifying within the child welfare system?
FINAL LOOK ON HOW TO SHOW SUPPORT

- Stay educated on bills and policies at the local/state and federal level
- Reach out to legislators showing support or lack thereof with certain bills
- Get educated on healthcare providers that support LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Get educated on different resources both locally and federally
- Thoroughly understand the privilege that we possess
- Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility
- Don’t assume, challenge stereotypes
- Call in, rather than Call Out
- Stand up for youth who identify LGBTQIA+

ONE FINAL VIDEO
ACTION PLAN

- Write down 3 things you plan to do
- Write down 3 takeaways
- Be prepared to share!

ANY QUESTIONS?