GENERATION Q: YOUTH AND THE EXPLORATION OF SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITIES

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Center
Office for Diversity and Inclusion

SafeZone
A project of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Programs Center
www.ohio.edu/lgbt
WHAT IS SAFEZONE?

The purpose of SafeZone training is to reduce homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism, and other “isms” connected to gender, orientation, and identity. SafeZone provides education on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex, Queer, and/or Transgender identities and explores ways to support anyone who is dealing with issues pertaining to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and/or gender expression. SafeZone is a scratching of the surface…our goal is for individuals to leave with resources that help them delve deeper into the complex and fascinating world of gender, sexuality, and identity.

Its not about being an expert, its about being an “ask-able” person.
**WHO ARE WE?**

- Your name
- Pronoun...he, she, they/them, ze, per, etc.
- Volunteers: share a story without using gendered language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Pronouns:</th>
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<tr>
<td>He/Him/His/His/Himself</td>
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<tr>
<td>She/Her/Her/Hers/Herself</td>
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<tr>
<td>They/Them/Their/Their/Theirs/Theirs/Theemselves</td>
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<td>Zie/Zim/Zir/Zirs/Zirself</td>
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<td>Xe/Xem//Xyr/Xyrs/Xemself</td>
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<td>Ey/Em/Eir/Eirs/Eirself</td>
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<td>Per/Per/Pers/Pers/Perself</td>
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<td>Sie/Sir/Hir/Hirs/Hirself</td>
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<td>Ve/Ver/Vis/Vers/Verself</td>
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<td>Ne/Nem/Nir/Nirs/Nirself</td>
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Why Sexual & Gender Diversity?

- All are equal and safe = ALL are equal and safe
- We all have the right to feel safe walking around our communities regardless of our beliefs, gender, orientation, religious affiliation, ability, ethnicity, etc.
- From an education perspective: If students don’t feel safe, they can’t learn
- Creating an environment where difference is not a bad thing … it enriches all of us
- It is not about privileging one identity over another but finding a way for identities to interact
- Intersectionality ~ recognizing our multiple isnesses
- Conversations on orientation and gender impact all of us … we all have sexuality, we all have gender
Sex ~ medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances.

- Male, Female, and Intersex (Disorders or Variations in Sex Development)

- Sexual Orientation ~ romantic, emotional, and/or sexual attraction
  - Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual

- Gender ~ how a person understands themselves to be male, female, both, none, or another identity entirely.
  - Transgender
  - Cisgender
  - Identity vs. expression
WHY THIS CONVERSATION MATTERS
REALITIES OF LGBTQ+

- Coming out younger and younger
  - Family Acceptance Project found that adolescents self-identified as LGB between ages 7 and 12
  - 2011 study showed that trans* and gender-nonconforming youth became aware of their gender at age 3
- LGBTQ youth are at increased risk of homelessness, dropping out of school, being victims of abuse, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and suicide
  - 50% of kids in elementary and middle school report being bullied based on perceived gender/orientation
  - LGBT youth are 5 times more likely to consider and/or attempt suicide
- In addition to typical challenges faced by all of us…
  - No state or federal protections for housing, employment, and public accommodation (changing for schools/universities due to changes in Title IX)
  - Ohio’s hate crime law does not include sexual orientation, gender identity, expression
  - Every reminders that we are not equal
  - Who are our possibility models?
TRANS REALITIES

Key issues…

- Sex-segregated facilities – Bathroom Bills
- Transphobia at all levels of society
- Lack of access to services
- Dealing with “diagnosis stigma” in order to be who you are
- To “pass” or not to “pass”

National Center for Transgender Equality and the Taskforce issued a study … “Injustice at Every Turn”

- Higher rates of unemployment, harassment, homelessness, and suicide
- About 6500 people interviewed: 63% of participants had experienced a serious act of discrimination.
  - Lost job and housing due to bias
  - School bullying/harassment so severe the respondent had to drop out (including teacher bullying)
  - Physical and sexual assault due to bias
  - Lost relationship with partner or children
  - Denial of medical service due to bias
TRAUMAS FOR LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

What is trauma?
- "Acute trauma occurs following a single traumatic event that causes extreme emotional or physical distress. Without treatment, acute trauma reactive symptoms can evolve into PTSD, anxiety, depression, etc. Experiencing multiple traumatic events can compound the effects. Examples: physical or sexual assault, police harassment." (National LGBT Health Education Center)
- Prepping body for fight, flight, or freeze
- Goes beyond our ability to cope and adapt

Presenting problem is a scratching of the surface ~ research on connection between trauma, mental health and co-occurring disorders substance abuse, eating disorders, HIV/AIDS and further violence
- Rates of homelessness
- Suicide
- Sex work to survive
- Failure to feel safe in school often contributes to poor academic and social performance

Pervasive violence in many forms
- Bullying and violence (threatened and actual) - physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, etc.
- Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia
- Internalized Homonegativity
- HIV / AIDS
- Second class citizens
- Lack of visibility = feelings of invisibility and lack of worth
- Rejection ~ Where do I belong? ~ Grief and loss
COMING OUT AND TRANSITIONING

- The added stress of “where do I belong”?
  - No community to come home to
- Coming out and Transitioning are individual AND communal journeys.
- What does it mean to be out?
- Having access to support services can be challenging
  - DSM V ~ Gender Identity Disorder changed to Gender Identity Dysphoria
  - Healthcare
  - Job security
- Not all young people are out to their families / communities
  - Families of Orlando victims finding out their loved one is LGBTQ after the shooting
TAKE A BREATHER – HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT SEX?
TO BE AN ACCOMPLICE, YOU NEED TO KEEP UP (AS BEST YOU CAN!)

- Language of sexual and gender constantly changing
  - What if there are no words to reflect a glimpse into who you are?
  - Creating, defining, re-defining, re-re-defining, reclaiming words for complex identities
  - Forcing people to see and understand themselves within binaries when reality is messy and colorful
- Other languages:
  - Gendering of things without value judgment
  - Spanish ~ Latinx; Latin@; a before o; use of e (elles, unides)
  - Resource to look at: Nonbinary.org
Language is changing

How do we express complex understandings of who we are with limited language?

Intergenerational Differences

Generation Queer

- Catch-all/umbrella identity
- Flexibility and fluidity of sexual identity and gender identity, and how we express both
- Avoiding traditional categories and binaries
- Challenges and Strengths? … “I call myself queer…I’m not going to fight with [people] about who I am. I know what I am! Either they accept it or they don’t. But that is their problem, not mine!”

Moving away from clinicalization, medicalization, and sexualization of LGBTQ youth, their bodies, and their experiences

- Labels as starting places for understanding (not as a set of limitations on identity)
- Comprehensive Sexual Education – teaching kids about their bodies and how to understand their bodies
- Healthy relationships and dynamics of consent
- Only because a young person is different does not mean they are sexual
- We are not behaviors and we are not issues … we are people

Why would anyone choose this vs. Why not be LGBTQ?

Acceptance as instant gratification vs. Acceptance as a process
What images, words, and/or phrases come to mind when you hear the term advocacy?

What can advocacy look like within a mental health / clinical setting?

Why is it important for mental health professionals to embody advocacy?

What policies impact the individuals we work with?

Most professional organizations (APA, AMA, NASW, etc) have come out against reparative and conversion therapies (Rep. Debbie Phillips co-introduced bill that would ban this in Ohio)

“Recovery involves the total person, physically, emotionally and spiritually.”
“When a human service program takes the step to become trauma-informed, every part of its organization, management and service delivery system is assessed and potentially modified to include basic understanding of how trauma affects the life of individuals seeking services. Trauma-informed organizations, programs and services are based on an understanding of the vulnerability or triggers of trauma survivors that traditional service delivery approaches may exacerbate, so that these services and programs can be more supportive and avoid re-traumatization.”
“Trauma Informed Care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.”
“Resiliency is the capability of individuals to cope successfully in the face of significant change, adversity, or risk. The capacity changes over time and is enhanced by protective factors in the individual and environment.” (Stewart et al., 1991 as cited by Greene and Conrad, 2002)

- Resilience as a trait: vigorous approach to life … sense of meaningfulness … internal locus of control (vs. external) (Phelps et al., 2009)
  - “Resilient survivors continue therefore, to grow and even thrive in spite of and quite often because of their history.” (Armour, 2007)
- Post Traumatic Growth ~ “Survivors of trauma who strengthen their abilities and find wisdom that allow them emotional growth…”
  - Strengthening of relationships / sense of connection
  - Increased sense of personal strengths
  - Awareness of increased possibilities
  - Healing on OUR terms – we are the expert in our lives and situations
HOLDING CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCIES TOGETHER

- We are having this training
- Increased presence in the media
  - Television Shows
  - Films
  - Advertisements
  - Children's Media
- Repeal of discriminatory practices locally and nationally and internationally
  - Examples: Repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell and SCOTUS Marriage Equality Decision
- Conversations on sexual and gender diversities becoming more common throughout all levels and sectors of society
- Outpouring of solidarity in response to Orlando
- Changes within religious institutions – open, welcoming, and affirming
- More and more people are coming out and sharing their stories

“I feel like I was born confident. I’ve always known who I am, and have lived my life as the girl I was born to be.”
TRANSFORMING “PUNCHABLE MOMENTS” INTO “TEACHABLE MOMENTS”

Key themes:
- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Cultural, historical, and gender Issues ~ Understanding how trauma affects the life of an individual
- Intersectionality and Trauma Informed Solidarity … we are more than just LGBTQIA
  - Recognize whole person ~ orientation and gender are not our only identities
  - How does sexuality and gender impact other aspects of who I am and how do these other aspects impact my sexuality and gender?
  - Honoring challenges and resiliencies … not victims but survivors and thrivers
  - Star Handout – recognizing multiple resources and opportunity to think outside the box
- Transformative power of Privilege ~ Confront homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and anti-LGBT jokes/comments.
- Orlando shooting as a mini-case study
  - What impact did shooting have on local LGBTQ community in Orlando?
  - What impact is shooting having in our communities here in Ohio?
THE ETIQUETTE OF TRANS ALLYSHIP

- Bloopers will happen…learn from them
- Be mindful of body questions ~ are they appropriate to context and service being provided
- Transitioning is unique to the individual and to their situation.
  - Remember that gender expression varies and we cannot police what is appropriate
  - Recognize that not all trans people or genderqueer folks are out there trying to smash the gender binary (but some of us are and affirm/celebrate us)
  - How a person identifies today may be different tomorrow
- Do your own homework and research, the trans people you know are not trans-wikis and don’t represent all trans people
  - Our understanding of identity and language and expression is constantly evolving
SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Do the forms have boxes that only offer the choices single / married / widowed / divorced?
- Are there options inclusive of sexual orientations /identities?
- Are there options inclusive of diverse family structures?
- What gender markers are included on forms?
- Can a person indicate what name and pronoun they wish to be used?
- Are we asking all people about sexual/relational violence?
- Demonstrate institutional commitment to affirming LGBTQ+ people
  - Develop inclusive policies: housing, client non-discrimination, employee non-discrimination
  - comprehensive counseling and healthcare
  - employee benefits
  - respond appropriately to anti-LGBTQ incidents and biases
  - Ongoing training / conversations / education
When greeting others

Avoid:
ladies  gentlemen  ma’am  sir  girls  guys  etc.

Consider using instead:

“Thanks, friends. Have a great night.”

“Good morning, folks!”

“Hi, everyone!”

“Can I get you all something?”

“And for you?”

Why?
Shifting to gender-inclusive language respects and acknowledges the gender identities of all people and removes assumption.

Be mindful of language

Based on Toni Latour’s “Hello there” cards.
FROM LANGUAGE TO SPACE

- Intersectional Physical Spaces
  - Gender Neutral Bathrooms…#peequality…#so that all may safely poop
  - Locker Rooms and changing spaces
  - Athletics and teams
- Whose included when we say “women’s health” and “men’s health”…. “boys group home” and “girls group home”?
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Title IX is a landmark federal civil right that prohibits sex discrimination in education.</td>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Title IX does not apply to female students only.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Schools must be proactive in ensuring that your campus is free of sex discrimination.</td>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Schools must have an established procedure for handling complaints of sexual discrimination, harassment, or violence.</td>
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<td><strong>5.</strong> Schools should ensure that a victim doesn't have to share spaces, such as dorms, classes and campus jobs, with his or her assailant.</td>
<td><strong>6.</strong> Schools may not retaliate against someone filing a complaint and must keep a complainant-victim safe from other retaliatory harassment or behavior.</td>
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<td><strong>7.</strong> Schools can issue a no-contact directive under Title IX to prevent the accused student from approaching or interacting with you.</td>
<td><strong>8.</strong> In cases of sexual violence, schools are prohibited from encouraging or allowing mediation (rather than a formal hearing) of the complaint.</td>
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<td><strong>9.</strong> Schools cannot discourage you from continuing your education.</td>
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WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

What do I do well and will continue to do?
What do I do that is not helpful and will stop doing?
Based on new knowledge, what will I start doing?
“I don’t have a problem with gay people as long as they act ‘normal’.”

“Why isn’t there a straight pride?”

“I accept gay people but that ‘trans’ stuff is just too radical for me.”

“You’re not a person of color. Why should I listen to you when you say that something I’m doing is racist?”

“I can’t be ____ist/phobic. I have ____ friends!”

“It’s just my opinion. Can’t you respect that? Free speech!”

“Why do we have to worry about every little identity? If it suits most of us, shouldn’t it be enough?”
QUESTIONS? QUEERIES? QUEERIOSITIES?
Resources to continue the conversation

National resources:
* Human Rights Campaign
* GLAAD
* National LGBTQ Taskforce
* Trevor Lifeline (also offers chat and text)
* Trans Lifeline
* Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
* COLAGE
* GLSEN
* GSA Network
* It Gets Better Project
* National Center for Trans Equality
* SAMHSA’s National Center for Trauma-Informed Care

Ohio resources:
* Appalachian Peace and Justice Network (Athens)
* Equality Ohio
* TransOhio
* Heartland Trans* Wellness Group
* Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO)
* Kaleidoscope Youth Center
We are here for you!

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