A Call to Action: AACRC’s New LGBTQ Policy Statement and Strategies for Responding to It

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The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their proper names

Confucius
Learning goals for participants

- To define key LGBTQ concepts and terms, key data and research on LGBTQ child/youth populations and how that information can be used to address stigma/bias and disparities affecting LGBTQ children and youth

- To apply techniques to guide self-reflection about attitudes toward LGBTQ identity and expression and to assess behaviors and practices at both personal and organizational levels

- How to apply 10 standards of care for improving services and supports for LGBTQ children/youth in human service systems

- How to use a practical strategic planning tool provided during the session to implement more culturally and linguistically competent policies and practices

- To discuss experiences and strategies for providing supports to LGBTQ children and youth among participants
Changing Perceptions of the LGBT Community

- Attitudes towards the LGBT community are rapidly changing
  - By 2013, 70% of Facebook users had at least one LGBT “friend”
  - Rapid pace of change between the era of “defense of marriage” and the era of popular support for LGBT enfranchisement, with 70% of the USA now achieving marriage equality
  - Historic inclusion of lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people in the State of the Union address

- Youth are more likely to express their LGBT identity and/or be “out” than adults
- Questioning or exploration of identity/orientation/expression are more common in youth than adults
- Cohort effects also mean providers may be less familiar with LGBT issues than youth are
The Pace of Marriage Equality

The spread of marriage equality, 2000-14

- Same-sex marriages
- Ban struck down, appeal pending
- Domestic partnerships/civil unions
- Same-sex marriages or unions not recognized

Source: Human Rights Campaign
The “Tipping Point”

- Scholars often talk about a “tipping point” where a minority community is sufficiently visible or accepted that it becomes an entrenched part of American life.

- For instance, 70% rule with rights’ law changes.
Cohort Effects in Out LGBT Population

Percentage Identifying as LGBT

2014 Gallup survey
A small poll (47 providers) done informally as part of AACRC’s 2014 annual meeting generated the following notable results:

- About 75% of responding agencies have at least sexual orientation non-discrimination in their client-facing policy.
- About 64% include LGBT issues in cultural competence training.
- 47% include gender identity/sexuality assessment in their admissions and/or treatment planning.
- Only 15% feel this is completely integrated throughout their agency or program.
- Only 13% endorsed doing self-assessment of LGBT competence.
LG BT Risk Factors

- Youth from non-accepting families are... (Ryan et al, 2010)
  - 6x as likely to have high levels of depression
  - 8x as likely to have attempted suicide
  - 3x as likely to use illegal/illicit drugs
  - 3x as likely to engage in unprotected sex
Homelessness / Being Out of Home as a Risk Lens

- Nationally, 20-40% of homeless youth are LGBT
- 1/3 of trans youth are turned away from shelters
- Of LGBT homeless youth, 62% attempt suicide and 58% are sexually assaulted, and they have substantially elevated substance use risks

(Source: USC School of Social Work)
Kids Pay Attention

- LGBT youth are sensitive to environmental cues that...
  - Deny
  - Discount
  - Show hostility
  - Project a lack of safety
  - Project a lack of potential support
A Quick Primer

- **LGBT** = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
  - Also LG BTQIA+, LG BTQ I2-S
  - The term “queer” is also sometimes used as an inclusive consideration of people of diverse or variant gender or sexual identities, expressions, or orientations

- **Sexual Orientation** = attraction to others who are of the same, other, or multiple sex/gender(s) or no attraction sexually

- **Gender Identity** = The internal sense of one’s gender (as male, female, both, neither)

- **Questioning** = A person who is unsure about their gender or sexual identity, orientation, or expression – this is relatively common among adolescents
Transgender Americans

- Prior to the last 2-3 years, there were only a few highly visible transgender Americans
- Open, highly visible transgender people and representation of transgender people have increased dramatically
  - Laverne Cox
  - Janet Mock
  - Kristin Beck
  - Jazz Jennings
  - OITNB
  - Transparent
Transgender Americans

- Transgender people have many advocacy points in common with LGB people but also unique needs (e.g., transition-related medical services, legal supports related to name and gender marker changes, etc.)

- Rates of trans-identified visibility show pronounced increase with younger age (e.g., our LG BT professional networking program has about 5% trans participation, vs. 30%+ in my LG BT Youth Group)
Trans* Terminology

- Transgender – referring to a person whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth (also sometimes used as an umbrella)

- Cisgender – referring to a person whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth

- Gender fluid – referring to people who experience a range of gender identity at different times / in different contexts

- Genderqueer, Non-Binary – referring to people whose gender experience does not fit in one of the “binary” categories of masculinity and femininity or maleness and femaleness

- Agender – referring to people who don’t experience gender as part of their identity

- Trans or Trans* - Umbrella / inclusive terms
Other Emerging LGBT Segments

- **Aces & Aros** – Asexual people do not experience a sense of sexual attraction to people of any sex / gender, and aromantic people do not feel / seek a sense of romantic bonding, although both groups may choose to partner, marry, have sex, etc.

- **Intersex people** have always been around, but the concept of openly intersex people is relatively newer.

- **Bi / Pan** – people who are attracted to more than one and/or all genders (or to people and not to genders, etc.) are increasingly open about their sexuality experience and creating new terms, like pansexual, to better describe their experience.
Polyamory - polyamory is the practice of romantic relationships among more than two people, typically seeking pro-actively to do so in a mutually empowering / ethically thoughtful fashion.

Two Spirit community - the two spirit community is composed of Native American people of diverse gender or sexual identities, orientations, or expressions (who may or may not consider themselves “LGBT”).

More broadly, reconciling or integrating LGBT identity with ethnic heritage is an emerging trend in the community, although most LGBT advocacy and activism remains solidly middle class and Caucasian.
AACRC Responds...

- AACRC’s 12th position paper, “Redefining Residential: Ensuring Competent Residential Interventions for Youth with Diverse Gender and Sexual Identities and Expressions,” was published on 10/17/2014.

- Like all AACRC position papers, it seeks to recognize leadership in this field that is already present within AACRC membership and beyond, raise important considerations, and call for all members to explore and improve their services.

- Our position as an organization also mirrors and extends existing guiding principles of inclusive care.
Guiding Principles of Inclusive Care

- Protection and safety
- Holistic support and affirmation of diverse sexual orientations and identities, including of staff
- Access to culturally and linguistically competent services and supports
- Youth voice in determining their treatment and care
- Staff members reflective of the LGBTQI2-S population served
- A system of care approach to ensure that organizational leaders, youth, family members, & staff
- Community partners are included in the youth’s treatment

(Source: Matarese, 2012)
Key Strategies for Improving Policies and Practices

- AACRC recognizes the foundational work done by Jeffrey Poirier with American Institutes of Research - his tool is available online:
  
  http://www.tapartnership.org/docs/LGBT_Improved_Support_Tool.pdf

Example:
American Institutes for Research Assessment Model
2. Enforce Non-discriminatory Policies for Serving LGBTQI2-S Youth and Their Families.

What are the signs that enforcement is needed?

Can you think of persons or agencies that you may wish NOT to work with as part of enforcement?
3. Promote Staff Knowledge and Development Around LGBTQI2-S Youth and Their Families.

**Hiring for fit** - do you include questions in screenings or interviews that ask about attitudes towards SOGIE?

Do you ask for staff to complete a self-assessment in this area or measure knowledge gained?
“4. Incorporate Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Intake Processes, Data Collection & Information sharing.

Are your interview questions inclusive?

Do you collect data on SOGIE?
5. Promote a Safe, Supportive and Culturally and Linguistically Competent (CLC) Environment.

Are trainings and supervisions covering increased comfort and knowledge with this subject?

Is it safe to not know in your workplace?

Do you assess for heterocentrism in your organization?

What if any struggles would your team have with calling clients by their preferred name?
7. Promote Healthy and Supportive Peer Connections.

Do you have peer support staff hired?

Do you cover dating and other age-normative issues specific to these populations?
8. Strengthen Family Connections.

Are you prepared to meet the family where they are with these issues?

Do you have a language for gauging what stage they may be in?

https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/PEP14-LG BTKIDS/PEP14-LG BTKIDS.pdf

Can you start an affinity group at your program? Are you connected with the local P-FLAG chapter to support parents? Do you have connections to communities of faith that are supportive?"
10. Facilitate Community Outreach and Engagement.

Are you aware of the available resources in your community?

If you don’t have local resources, can you find online resources?

Could your agency become a local resource?
Additional Considerations

- Non-coercive Environments.
- Housing Considerations.
- Navigating Multiple Identities
- Non-LG BTQ I2-S youth.
Self-Reflection Exercises

Preparedness = Comfort + Knowledge
Self-Reflection on Comfort Level:
Rate your Comfort with Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression

Completely Comfortable
10 9 8 7 6

Some comfort and moderate level of discomfort
5 4 3 2 1

Discomfort
Case Example

You have a young person that wishes to begin to match their gender expression with their gender identity and they request a shopping trip to buy clothing of the gender they identify with. Is your team comfortable enough to handle this request?
Video Vignette #1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVflpLWFCtA
Video Vignette #2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwV7ENOTeeK
Self-Reflection on Knowledge:
Rate your Knowledge of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression

10: Completely Knowledgeable
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1: Very Little Knowledge

Some knowledge and moderate lack of knowledge
Questions

- What knowledge did you attain from the first part of this training?
- Where do you think you need more education?
- How will you go about learning what you think you need to learn?
- In what venues can you imagine sharing your new knowledge with colleagues, internally and externally?
Self Awareness Assessments

Small group exercise:
Take a few minutes to review the assessment handout. In a group of 3-4 people, discuss your comfort and knowledge with the categories.
References
(Additional references are provided in the position paper)


Tawara D. Goode, M.A. and Sylvia K. Fisher, Ph.D. National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. Adapted from Promoting Cultural Diversity and Cultural Competency: Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Behavioral Health Services and Supports to Children, Youth and Their Families ©2009