

Moving the Margins: Training Curriculum for Child Welfare Services

with LGBTQ Youth
in Out-of-Home Care



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LGBTQ 101



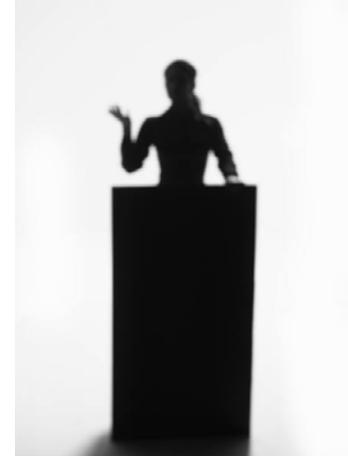
LGBTQ 101

Training Goals & Objectives

- **To introduce participants to the workshop, establish guiding principles and identify core concepts.**
- **To clarify and assess personal, religious and cultural views and values regarding LGBTQ youth and young adults and develop strategies that balance personal beliefs with professional responsibilities.**
- **To identify issues of risk, challenges and strengths specific to LGBTQ youth and young adult populations, their families, other caregivers and service delivery systems.**
- **To develop an action plan for immediate, short-term and long-term activities that will develop or enhance professional and agency cultural competency.**



Icebreaker Exercise



Opening Introductions

Dyad Exercise

- **How did you get your name? Tell a story about your name.**
- **What brought you to this workshop? What made you sign up?**
- **What is your greatest hope and your greatest fear for the training?**
- **How would you describe the culture of your agency in terms of LGBTQ issues?**
- **How would you describe the culture of the geographical region in which you will be training and the culture of the agencies/organizations in which you will be training?**

Guiding Principles

- **Be open.**
- **Respect differences.**
- **Use “I-Statements.”**
- **Step Up/Step Back.**
- **Feelings are 100% OK.**
- **Right to pass.**
- **Respect confidentiality.**
- **Take care of yourself.**
- **Any question or concern is 100% OK.**
- **Share air time.**



Module I

Goals & Objectives

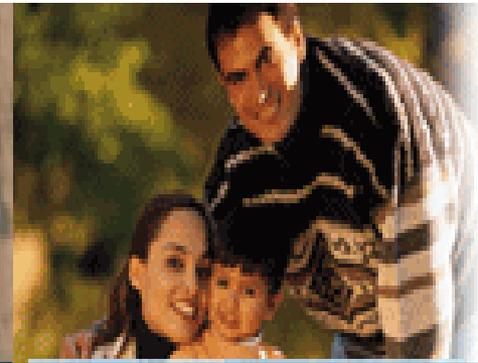
- **To introduce participants to the workshop, establish guiding principles and identify core concepts.**
- **To create an open learning environment in which participants can safely explore personal views and values and articulate professional responsibilities.**
- **To develop strategies for balancing personal and professional values when they are in conflict.**
- **To increase understanding and competence with sexual and gender minority clients.**

Core Concepts

✚ **Personal and Religious Values**

✚ **Safety**

✚ **Family**



Module II: Opening Icebreaker Exercise



The Impact of Silence



Module II

Goals & Objectives

- **To increase knowledge and empathy regarding the unique stressors experienced by sexual and gender minority youth, their families and caregivers.**
- **To demonstrate increased understanding of the issues around coming out and how they might impact youth in care.**
- **To recognize that “coming out” is not about sexual behavior, but about identity and relationships, both of which are critical to youth development.**
- **To articulate the potential consequences of social and emotional isolation on sexual and gender minority clients.**

Potential Consequences of Isolation

- **Substance abuse**
- **Homelessness**
- **Dropping out**
- **Running away**
- **Risky sexual behaviors**
- **Higher risk of HIV infection**
- **Depression**
- **Anxiety**
- **Suicidality**
- **Vulnerability to juvenile justice involvement**
- **Victimization**

Protective Factors for LGBTQ Youth

- **Family functioning**
- **Family support**
- **Family acceptance**
- **Self-esteem**
- **Educational achievement**
- **Connection to school**
- **Active coping strategies**
- **Self-acceptance**
- **Positive attitudes towards sexual and gender diversity**
- **(Sometimes) Disclosure of sexual orientation to parent**



Module III

Working Definitions

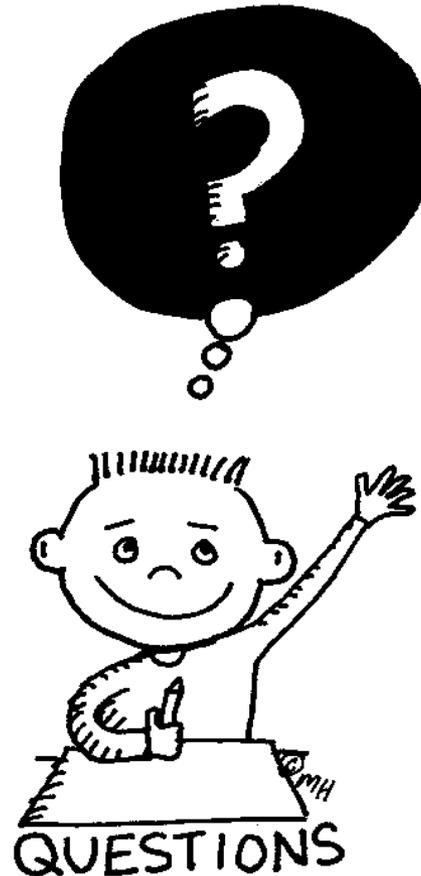
- **Increase participant knowledge regarding current definitions of sexual orientation, sex, gender and other relevant constructs.**
- **Demonstrate increased understanding of the differences between sexual orientation, sex and gender, and increased cultural competence in use of terminology.**

Working Definitions

- **Sex**
- **Intersex**
- **Gender**
- **Gender Identity**
- **Gender Expression**
- **Gender Dysphoria**
- **Transgender**
- **Hormonal Support**
- **Gender Identity Disorder**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Heterosexual/Straight**
- **Homosexual**
- **Gay**
- **Lesbian**
- **Same Gender Loving**
- **Two Spirit**
- **Bisexual**
- **Pansexual**
- **Questioning**
- **LGBTQ**

Working Definitions

- **Heterosexism**
- **Homophobia**
- **Biphobia**
- **Transphobia**
- **The Down Low**
- **Womanist**



Module IV

Values Clarification

- **Achieve clarity about personal, religious and cultural beliefs and values regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.**
- **Identify strategies for balancing personal views with professional responsibilities.**
- **Reduce adherence to myths and stereotypes regarding sexual and gender minority people.**

Module V

Learning Lab

- **Provide participants with hands-on experience in dealing with the issues and concerns that they are most likely to face in their roles.**
- **Identify situations and scenarios associated with sexual orientation or gender identity that participants are most likely to face in their current jobs.**
- **Increase comfort and expertise in handling these situations as they arise.**

Module VI

Next Steps/Action Steps

- **To develop concrete next steps for providing culturally competent services to sexual and gender minority clients.**
- **To put what has been learned in this training into action in the field.**



Group Brainstorm



Brainstorming Activity

What are the situations and concerns that have arisen, or that you believe could arise, in your work with LGBTQ clients?

Identify Action Steps

- **Immediate**
- **In the Short-Term**
- **Over the Long-Term**

Module VII

Close & Evaluations

- **Reinforce the learning.**
- **Provide participants with the opportunity to offer feedback on their experience in the training.**



LGBTQ 201



LGBTQ 201

Training Goals & Objectives

- **To articulate the psychosocial needs of LGBTQ youth and identify risk and protective factors facing LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care.**
- **To understand how to manage confidential information within the child welfare system around a youth's disclosures of sexual orientation and gender identity.**
- **To experience increased confidence and competence in discussing sexual orientation and gender identity issues with youth and helping families and other caregivers adapt and adjust to children's sexual orientation and gender identity.**
- **To identify LGBTQ-affirmative programmatic and policy interventions for LGBTQ youth in out-of-home settings, and community resources for LGBTQ youth, their families, other caregivers and service providers.**

Module I

Identification of LGBTQ Issues for Youth in Out-of-Home Care

Goals & Objectives

- **Identify the issues and challenges affecting LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care.**
- **Increase participants' awareness of how these issues are manifested in their own agencies and service delivery systems.**



Brainstorming Activity

LGBTQ Issues for Youth in Out-of-Home Care

- **Victimization**
- **Confidentiality Violations**
- **Differential Treatment**
- **Lack of Cultural Competence Among Providers**
- **Disclosure Dilemmas**
- **Lack of Family-Centered Services**

Victimization

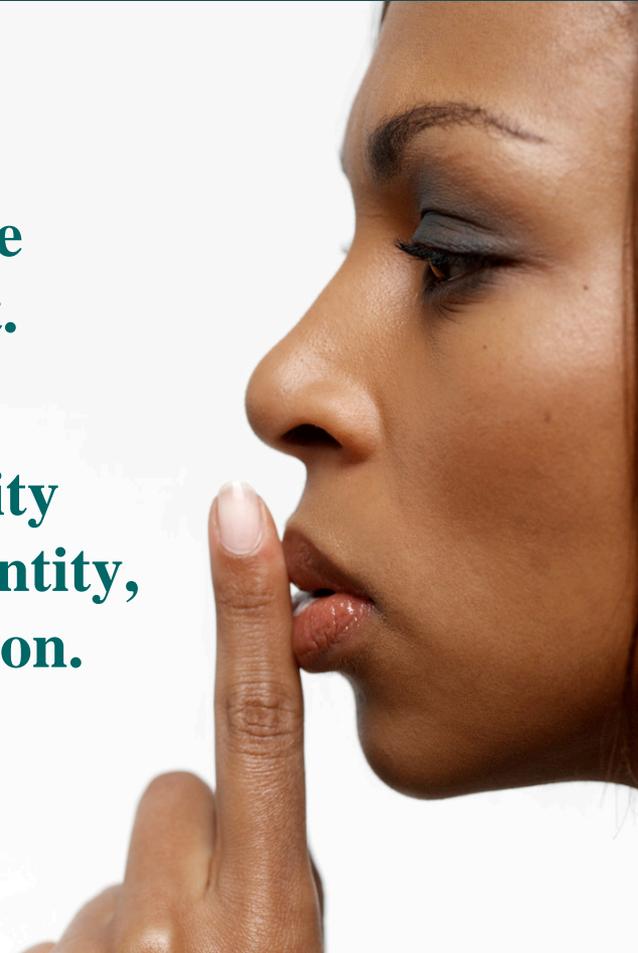
- **Many LGBTQ youth experience rejection and abuse when they come out to their caretakers, peers or teachers at school.**
- **They may be thrown out of their homes or experience violence resulting from adult response to their sexual orientation and gender identity.**
- **39% of 400 LGBTQ or HIV+ youths (ages 12 to 24) living in out-of-home care or homeless in San Diego had been kicked out of their home due to sexual orientation or gender identity (Berberet, 2004).**

Victimization

- **56% of a sample of gay/lesbian youth in NYC child welfare system said they stayed on the streets because they felt safer than living in group or foster homes (Mallon, 1998).**
- **78% of LGBTQ youth were removed or ran away from placements as a result of hostility toward their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Joint Task Force, 1994).**
- **90% of the 400 San Diego youth said that safety was a concern in group homes and shelters (Berberet, 2004).**
- **Only 20% of the San Diego service providers thought safety was an issue (Berberet, 2004).**

Confidentiality Violations

- **Staff persons disclose a youth's sexual orientation or gender identity to foster, biological and adoptive parents and/or the youth's peers without the youth's consent.**
- **Lack of policies that address confidentiality around sexual orientation and gender identity, including policies on written documentation.**



Differential Treatment

- **LGBTQ youth may not be allowed to share a room with other youth.**
- **Different standards may be applied to LGBTQ youth around dating and the pursuit of romantic relationships.**
- **Youth experience multiple placements due to lack of staff acceptance and understanding, lack of safety and peer rejection.**
- **LGBTQ youth experience disapproval and rejection from caseworkers, foster parents, residential program staff and their peers.**
- **Youth have a difficult time accessing LGBTQ-affirmative health and mental health services.**
- **Permanency is seldom the goal.**
- **LGBTQ youth drop out of educational placements due to hostility and a lack of support.**
- **An assumption is often made that LGBTQ youth are “predators” if they are caught engaging in sexual behaviors with a same-sex peer.**

Lack of Cultural Competence

- **Staff persons often lack knowledge and sensitivity on how to support LGBTQ youth in their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.**
- **Staff persons often lack knowledge of LGBTQ resources.**
- **Transgender youth are inappropriately placed in settings that are incongruent with their gender identity.**
- **Transgender youth may not be allowed to use their preferred name.**
- **Transgender youth are prohibited from dressing and grooming in ways that are congruent with their gender identity.**
- **Professionals may not know how to talk with biological, adoptive or foster parents about sexual orientation and gender identity issues.**

Disclosure Dilemmas

- **Decision-making around disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity.**
- **Unsupportive and negative responses to a youth's disclosures by professionals, peers and caregivers.**
- **Lack of skill in handling a youth's disclosures in group settings.**

Lack of Family-Centered Services

- **Many programs serve LGBTQ youth as individuals rather than serving them within the context of their families.**
- **Permanency is seldom a goal for LGBTQ youth and there is a shortage of LGBTQ-affirming foster families.**
- **LGBTQ youth are at a greater risk of a lack of permanence due to a lack of connection with birth families and communities and a shortage of LGBTQ-friendly placement options.**
- **LGBTQ youth are often placed in congregate care due to a lack of connection with family of origin and a shortage of LGBTQ-friendly placement options, but many of these youth are not in need of this type of structure.**
- **This type of care decreases the likelihood of permanence because there is a greater likelihood of running away and aging out of systems of care.**
- **Youth in these settings are less likely to transition into a family type setting.**

Module II

Increasing Providers' Sensitivity & Enhancing Skills

Goals & Objectives

- **To increase confidence and competence in discussing sexual orientation and gender identity issues with youth.**
- **To articulate the challenges LGBTQ youth experience during their process of coming out to self and when considering disclosure to other persons.**



Prepare Yourself

Become an ask-able person.

- **Self-awareness about personal beliefs and attitudes.**
- +
- **Knowledge about and appreciation of LGBTQ youth.**
- +
- **Competent social work and interpersonal skills.**
- +
- **Emphasize professional over personal values.**

Essential Knowledge

- **Psychosocial strengths and needs of LGBTQ youth and families.**
- **Local, state and national resources.**
- **Culturally diverse, LGBTQ-affirmative books, posters, magazines, brochures and symbols.**
- **Mental and physical health care professionals who specialize in serving LGBTQ youth, especially transgender youth.**



When Youth Disclose

- **Anticipate feelings of vulnerability.**
- **Affirm, validate and accept.**
- **Start where the client is.**
- **Avoid labeling.**
- **Help youth safely explore and understand their feelings, thoughts and behaviors.**
- **Follow the youth's lead in using terminology.**
- **Help them find information and resources.**
- **Provide accurate information that eliminates myths and stereotypes.**
- **Do not assume their problems are related to their sexual orientation or gender identity; do not assume they are unrelated.**

When a Youth is Distressed

- **Encourage expression of feelings, worries and concerns.**
- **Explore underlying beliefs and attitudes.**
- **Correct misinformation.**
- **Assess readiness and desire for resources and information.**



When a Youth is Confused

- **Validate confusion.**
- **Be affirming and supportive.**
- **Assess their level of information and provide accurate information.**
- **Correct myths and stereotypes.**
- **Provide reassurance.**
- **Focus on quality of interpersonal relationships, general coping skills and gradual exploration of sexuality.**



Learning Lab #1



Module III

Addressing Confidentiality Issues for LGBTQ Youth in Out-of-Home Care

Goals & Objectives

- **Appreciate the importance of confidentiality for LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care.**
- **Identify strategies for managing confidential information related to sexual orientation and gender identity.**





Values Clarification Exercise

Module IV

Enhancing Knowledge & Skills to Intervene with Families

Goals & Objectives



- **To articulate the rationale for intervening with families of LGBTQ youth.**
- **To identify approaches and strategies for strengthening and supporting the families of LGBTQ youth.**
- **To understand the issues and concerns presented by biological, adoptive and foster parents.**
- **To increase confidence and competence in discussing sexual orientation and gender identity issues with families and other caregivers.**
- **To identify emerging resources for guiding professionals in working with families of LGBTQ youth.**

Learning Lab

Vignette A

Marta has lived with the Stevenson foster family since infancy. She has recently come out as a lesbian and wants to have her girlfriend come to the house to visit. Ms. Stevenson opposes this. Marta calls her caseworker to complain. What should the caseworker do?

- What concerns might Ms. Stevenson have?**
- What should the caseworker's approach with Ms. Stevenson be?**
- What are the strengths presented by the people involved?**
- What are the legal issues involved?**
- What might be helpful to this family?**

Learning Lab

Vignette B

Jackie is a transgender MTF 15-year-old who lives with a supportive, loving foster family. Jackie wants to go to school dressed like a girl. The foster family approves, but the caseworker prohibits this, expressing fear for Jackie's safety. What do you think about the caseworker's decision?

- What are Jackie's rights?**
- What might be motivating the caseworker?**
- What issues should Jackie consider?**
- What might Jackie need?**
- What actions might the foster family take?**

Learning Lab

Vignette C

Grant has been in a relative placement with his Aunt Lynn since he was 5 years old. He is now 13 years old and recently came out as gay to his aunt. Lynn wants Grant removed from her home for fear that he will hurt her children. Grant does not want his biological parents to know about his sexual orientation and tells his social worker not to mention this in the decision-making meeting. Lynn is adamant about bringing up Grant's sexual orientation in the meeting in the presence of Grant's parents. What should the social worker do?

- What should the social worker explore with Grant?**
- What should the social worker explore with Lynn?**
- What approach should the social worker take with Lynn?**

Learning Lab

Vignette D

Rafael, who is 15 years old and bisexual, is being physically and emotionally abused by his father, who will not accept his son's sexual orientation and wants him out of the home. Rafael's mother does not agree with her husband and wants Rafael to stay in the home. What should the social worker do?

- What should the social worker explore with Rafael?**
- What should the social worker explore with Rafael's parents?**
- What approaches might the social worker take with this family?**

Learning Lab

Vignette E

Paul is an openly gay 15-year-old. A worker needs to recommend a placement for Paul. The worker has a choice between a foster family that has never dealt with an LGBTQ youth but seems open and a group home specifically for LGBTQ youth. What should the social worker consider in this case?

- What does “open” mean? What would be important to assess with this foster family?**
- What type of placement does the youth want?**

Learning Lab #2



Module V

Addressing Differential Treatment in Child Welfare Agencies

Goals & Objectives

- To articulate how differential treatment of LGBTQ youth is manifested in child welfare settings and institutions.
- To identify strategies for eliminating differential treatment of LGBTQ youth in child welfare agencies and institutions.
- To understand agencies' legal obligations to provide non-discriminatory treatment.
- To identify next steps for participants' individual agencies or institutions.



Learning Lab #1



Learning Lab

Case A

Crystal, a 15-year-old transgender MTF in a group home, got jumped by a bunch of guys in the home when she returned after visiting a friend one night. Crystal was dressed in a dress, heels and make-up.

- **How should the group home staff respond?**
- **What should the group home address with the boys?**
- **With Crystal?**
- **What policies should be in place?**
- **What other actions should the group home take to ensure the safety of LGBTQ youth?**

Learning Lab

Case B

LaToya, a 16-year-old lesbian who lives in a group home, wants to go to her junior prom with her girlfriend, who goes to the same school. The school has notified the group home that they will not permit her to come with a date of the same sex.

- **How should the group home respond?**

Learning Lab

Case C

Josh, a 17-year-old gay adolescent, lives at a residential center. He was notified that he must appear before the treatment planning committee because a staff person saw him walking on the grounds, holding hands with another young man who lives at the center. The committee is meeting to consider what consequences should be imposed, such as point loss or moving him down a level.

- **What issues must be considered here?**

Resources on Culturally Competent Service Delivery & Legal Rights for LGBTQ Youths

- **Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund**
<http://www.lambdalegal.org/>
- **National Association of Social Workers** <http://www.socialworkers.org>
- **American Psychological Association** <http://www.apa.org/>
- **American Psychiatric Association** <http://www.psych.org/>
- **American Pediatric Association** <http://www.aap.org/>
- **National Education Association** <http://www.nea.org>
- **Child Welfare League of America** <http://www.cwla.org>

Resources

- **Just the Facts Coalition. (2008).** *Just the facts about sexual orientation and youth: A primer for principals, educators, and school personnel.* [Online.] Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/equity/default.asp>
- **Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and Child Welfare League of America. (2006).** *Getting down to basics: Tools to support LGBTQ youth in care.* New York: Authors.
- **Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and Child Welfare League of America. (2006).** *Out of the margins: A report on regional listening forums highlighting the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth in care.* New York: Authors.
- **Sullivan, C., Sommer, S., and Moff, J. (2001).** *Youth in the margins: A report on the unmet needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adolescents in foster care.* New York: Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.
- **Wilber, S., Ryan, C., and Marksamer, J. (2006).** *CWLA best practice guidelines: Serving LGBT youth in out-of-home care.* Washington DC: Child Welfare League of America.

Module VI

Addressing the Needs of Transgender Youth in Out-of-Home Care Goals & Objectives

- **To increase participants' awareness of gender, gender expression and gender identity as social constructions.**
- **To increase participants' sensitivity to the experiences of transgender youth in out-of-home care.**
- **To identify strategies for delivering culturally competent care to transgender youth.**
- **To identify policies that protect and enhance the well-being of transgender youth.**



Awareness Building Exercise



Group Brainstorm



Agency Actions and Policies for Discussion

- **Initiation and continuation of hormone treatment for transgender youth.**
- **Allowing personal grooming, including hair and clothing, that is congruent with a youth's gender identity.**
- **Providing undergarments to transgender youth that are congruent with their gender identity.**
- **Using the youth's preferred name and pronoun.**
- **Providing the youth with a private bedroom.**
- **Providing the youth with privacy while showering.**

Closing & Evaluation

We have provided a broad overview in this training of:

- Issues of LGBT youth in out-of-home care.**
- LGBT cultural competence.**
- Challenges facing LGBT youth, their parents, other caregivers and service providers.**

Your role in addressing next steps is key.