Introduction to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)

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Who Am I?
Am I Who They Say I Am?

Thank-you for all that CONTINUE to Do to guide Each other, Individuals, children, families, Vendors and communities!

- Rising each day to shine bright again
- Seeing the strength’s in all people, even when it’s cloudy
- Managing our current challenges and staying calm
- Shining light upon difficult situations
- Managing all continuums of diversity
- Having a desire and willingness to learn!!!
Agenda

- SOGIE and Terminology Review
- Best practice considerations
- What would you like to share, learn and or discuss?

CAHT Box: Introductions

► Please chat your state, agency & role

► One thing in your department that would indicate the department is LGBTQ accepting and supportive:

► Example: Our forms offer an option for gender:
  - Male
  - Female
  - Other _______

LGBTQIA+

Lesbian
Gay
Bi
Transgender
Questioning
Queer
Intersex
Ally
Private POLL:
Personal Perspectives

- LGBTQ is wrong and we shouldn’t be encouraging individuals to engage in these lifestyles
- I think this is a private matter and we shouldn’t be talking about it at all
- I am uncomfortable with LGBTQ issues because I don’t know what to think or do
- I embrace all kinds of diversity and treat everyone the same

Key POINT:

You do not have to understand or agree with someone’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression to respect and support their right to be and express themselves.

Group Agreements

- We are here to help you, as professionals, to understand the needs of individuals as they relate to SOGIE/LGBTQ. The goal is for you to provide the same quality of services to individuals who identify as LGBTQ as you provide to all individuals.

- We ask for respect for all differences and if anytime anyone is offended, please just say “ouch”.
Poll: Our Comfort Level Re: Engaging in Conversations About Sexual Identity and Relationships

- Not at all comfortable and I do not ask any questions
- Not at all comfortable, I ask because the question is on a form
- A little bit comfortable, I will discuss if the consumer starts the discussion about their identify or partners
- Comfortable, I will ask a question if I suspect their identify or partners are not the norm
- Comfortable and know asking LGBTQ questions are critical to quality provision of services
Why We May Avoid the “Topic”

- Workers have different life experiences, and belief systems that impact their work.

- Competence can be developed through experience and skill building.

Guiding Principles

1. All individuals deserve safety and acceptance in their homes and communities.

2. All individuals need support and nurturance to develop and embrace all aspects of their evolving identities, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE).

3. Individuals thrive when their people around them affirm and respect their SOGIE.

Guiding Principles

5. Family/community acceptance both protects against health risks and promotes overall health, whereas family rejection contributes to negative health outcomes.

6. Individuals are the principle owners of information related to their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.
Terms, Letters (LGBTQ - IA...) and SOGIE

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by TSER

Design by Lundy Pan and Anna Moore

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender
Poll: When do/did you need to come out as “strait”/heterosexual and/or identify with your birth gender?

- When I was born I told my caregivers I was a boy or girl
- As a toddler when I told my caregivers the clothes I like, the things I like to do
- When I went to school and realized I was like the other kids
- As a pre-teen/teen and I liked or was going to date the opposite sex
- Every time I go to the Dr. or an agency and complete forms
- When I am transferred to a hospital or housing/“home” roommate
Learning the Language Activity: Search the Internet

Gender Identity & Expression

- Intersex
- Cisgender
- Gender Nonconforming
- Genderqueer
- Intersex
- Transgender
- Two-spirit

Hello, my name is June and I identify as a female, what is your name?

Do you identify as a male, female or other?
Sexual Orientation

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Same Gender Loving

Overview

- Gender and Sexuality are two different aspects of an individual’s identity

- How people describe themselves is important

- Vocabulary is important for showing respect and gaining trust

"I am afraid to tell you who I am, because, if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it’s all that I have"  
  ~ John Powell

- What you see is not necessarily what you get

- Rigid binary constructs common in our culture lead to discrimination

- We have all been taught to think in the binary so we need to practice being more flexible in our understanding of sexual orientation (SO) and gender identity and expression (GIE)
Late 1800’s in America

“Social norms of the period dictated that the home was a woman’s place. Even as women entered the workplace, often in the new factories that were being built at the time, there was a reluctance to integrate them fully into public life. Women, policymakers argued, were inherently weaker and still in need of protection from the harsh realities of the public sphere. Thus, separate facilities were introduced in nearly every aspect of society: women’s reading rooms were incorporated into public libraries; separate train cars were established for women, keeping them in the back to protect them in the event of a crash; and, with the advent of indoor bathrooms that were then in the process of replacing single-person outhouses, separate loos soon followed. The suggested layouts of restrooms, says Kogan, were designed to mimic the comforts of home—think curtains and chaise lounges.”

Source: https://time.com/4337761/history-sex-segregated-bathrooms/

LGBTQ
Physical and Brain HEALTH DISPARITIES

What are health disparities anyway?

When research indicates that one group is over represented within a category of health conditions or risk for that category/condition compared to the rest of the population.

CHAT BOX: What have you observed in your department?
Greatest Health Disparities for LGBTQ Individuals

- Family Rejection
- Suicide
- Alcohol and Substance Abuse Issues
- Sexual Health
- Bullying / Victimization
- Homelessness / Exploitation

Family Rejection and Health Risks

Compared to LGBTQ peers who report no/low levels of family rejection, LGBTQ young adults who report high levels of rejection during adolescence were:

- 8.4x more likely to report having attempted suicide
- 5.9x more likely to report high levels of depression
- 3.4x more likely to report illegal drug use
- 3.4x more likely to have engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse

Suicide Risks

LGB youth are 4 times more likely to attempt suicide than their straight peers.

- Suicide attempts by LGB and questioning youth are 4 to 6X more likely to result in injury, poisoning, or overdose that requires medical treatment.
- 50% of transgender youth have seriously contemplated suicide, and ¼ report having made an attempt.
- Suicide attempts are nearly 2X higher among Black and Hispanic LGB youth than White LGB youth.
Substance Abuse

LGB Youth are more likely to drink before age 13:

- 21.3% of Heterosexual Youth drank before age 13
- 34.6% of LGB Youth drank before age 13

Youth in group care in Allegheny County:

- 24% of LGB Youth report using drugs to cope with stress vs. 5% of Heterosexual Youth

Sexual Health

LGB Youth are less likely to use a condom:

- 65.5% of Heterosexual Youth use condoms
- 35.8% of LGBTQ Youth use condoms

The highest rates of HIV infection exist among young African American MSM

Lesbian and Bisexual Girls have higher rates of unplanned pregnancy than their Heterosexual peers

Health Disparities and Bullying: LGBTQ perception of school safety

- 55.5% felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation
- 37.8% felt unsafe at school because of their gender expression
- 30.3% missed at least 1 day of school in the past 30 days. 10.6% missed 4 or more days in the past 30 days
- Over 30% avoided gender segregated areas (bathrooms, locker rooms)
Safety, Violence & Victimization

Many LGBTQ Youth experience violence or victimization related to their sexual orientation or gender identity

- Transgender youth are especially at risk; identity is hard to hide
- LGBTQ youth are twice as likely as their peers to report being threatened or injured with a weapon or assaulted
- Each episode of LGBT victimization, such as physical or verbal harassment or abuse, increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior by 2.5 times on average.

Homelessness

- Over 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ
- Once homeless, LGBTQ youth:
  - Are at higher risk for victimization
  - Suffer higher incidence of mental health problems and unsafe sex
  - Report experiencing an average of 7 more acts of violence than heterosexual cisgender homeless youth

I am who they say I am

Context of Discrimination

- **Societal Constructs/Norms**
  - Gendered Roles
  - Gendered Clothing/Toys

- **Responses from Others**
  - Emotional/Physical Abuse
  - Institutional Discrimination

- **Internalization**
  - Rejection of Self
  - Self-Harm
POLL: A Call to Action

- Family relationships
- School/work environments
- Health care
- Social support
- Adult support/advocacy
- Role models
- Safety/Risk
- Coming out process

CHAT: What will you add to your radar?

Why It’s Important to ASK about SOGIE: Risk Factors

- Isolation
- Family Difficulties
- Substance Abuse
- Suicide
- HIV/AIDS
- School/employment challenges
- Homelessness
- Mental Health Issues

It’s All About Demonstrating Respect

- Identify you are there to support and never mean to offend
- Ask questions
- Be willing to learn from the individual
- Ask them the questions that need to be asked!
- Address them the way they want to be addressed
Preferred Name

- A common start to a relationship
- Introduce yourself and ask an individual what they like to be called
  - This is an individual’s preferred name...use it
  - This will naturally lead into the next question...pronouns

Pronouns

- Ask the individual what gender pronouns they use
- Asking everyone normalizes it
- Wrongly assuming gender pronouns hurts youth
- Starting a relationship with inclusive questions
  - creates a feeling of safety
  - allows youth to open up to you

Pronouns

- Gendered vs. Gender Neutral Pronouns
- Gender Binary Pronouns Do Not Fit All
- Assumptions about Gender:
  - Creates barriers to engagement
  - Decreases rapport
  - Increases pain
Using Gender Neutral Pronouns

Most people are familiar with using she/her/hers and he/him/his as singular pronouns, but check out these gender neutral options!

- They
- Them
- Their
- Ze/Zie
- Hir
- Hirs
- Ey
- Em
- Eir
- Xe
- Xem
- Xyr

They/them/their is one of the most common, and in addition to these, some people prefer not to be referred to by pronouns at all.

How to Ask about Pronouns

- Start by providing your gender pronouns when you introduce yourself.
- “What are your gender pronouns?”
- Responding to the “Why?” question
- Responding to inappropriate responses

If Gender Neutral Pronouns are Requested...

- *It’s a good time to ask about gender identity.*
- “How do you identify?”
You’ll Make a Mistake

Apologize, Correct It, and then Move On.

► Avoid continually talking about how bad you feel for making the mistake.

► Don’t make it about you and your mistake.

Inclusive Language

Don’t Say: Do you have a husband/wife?
Try: Do you have a spouse, partner, or significant other?

Don’t Say: Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend?
Try: Are you dating anyone? Are they male, female non-conforming?

OR

Tell me about the important people in your life...

Sexual Behavior

► Knowing sexual behavior is necessary to understanding sexual risks and health
► “Are you sexually active?”
► “Do you have relationships with boys, girls, both, neither?”
► “How do you keep yourself safe?”
► Don’t assume behavior based on relationships
Why Might an Individual's SOGIE Be Fluid Change?

- Fluid Personality
- Coming out process
- Expectations of others
- Safety
- Life Experiences and Development

Standards of Practice
Things to consider related to:
Gender Identity and Expression

- Declared gender vs. assigned gender in identifying appropriate service connections
- Use of preferred name and pronoun
- Facilities with bathroom accommodations
- Access to sensitive health care
- Safe community connections and support
- Legal services and advocacy
- Address the WHOLE person and their environment

Standards of Practice
Things to consider related to:
Sexual Orientation

- SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY
- Confidentiality
- Support System
- Sexual exploitation, dating violence
- Inclusive sexual health education
- Access to health care
- Room assignments
- Romantic relationships, dating policies and sexual activity
Identifying Competent Services or Supports

- Look for:
  - LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination policy
  - Marketing materials are inclusive of LGBTQ individuals and families
  - Intake forms, etc. are inclusive
  - Organization’s staff have received training
  - Previous positive experiences
  - Demonstrate understanding of specific issues you are referring for

Summary and Conclusions

- Terminology - Appropriate use of Language
- Difference between SO, GIE, LGBTQ
- Important to identify and talk to individuals about SOGIE
- SOGIE impacts care and work with individuals, and requires competent strategies to address
- Other aspects of identity matter and influence experiences related to SOGIE
- We can all improve our competence in addressing SOGIE

Questions/Next Steps