Creating “Brave Spaces” for LGBT-identified Youth with Disabilities

2016 APRIL Conference
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Grant Heffelfinger
Creating “Brave Spaces” for LGBT-identified Youth with Disabilities

Objective:

- Differentiate between sex, gender identity, gender expression, and attraction.
- To assist Staff at CILs with the tools/resources for creating an inviting space for LGBT-identified youth with disabilities.
Disability

Cognitive
Physical
Intellectual
Developmental
Psychiatric
Mental Health
What is LGBTQ+?

Stands for: **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer**

“Gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation are independent of one another (i.e., they are not connected).”

–Sam Killermann, Co-Creator of TheSafeZoneProject.com
The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by: Trans Student Educational Resources

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender
Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
What is Intersectionality?

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage: ‘through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us.’

-Oxford Dictionary Online
Intersecting Identities

- Having an intersectional identity often generates a feeling that someone does not completely belong in one group or another.
- Resulting in feelings of isolation, depression and other mental health issues.
Example: a disabled lesbian Muslim will have to deal with ableism, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism and sexism. She might find physical barriers to accessing LGBT venues, but even when she can get into the building she might still face racism and Islamophobia from the white LGBT community.
Brave Space Guidelines

1. Controversy with civility
2. Own your intentions & impacts.
3. Choose to challenge yourself & take learning risks.
4. Respect others as they wish to be respected.
5. No ad hominem attacks.
6. Use the “Bike Rack” for questions and ideas that are off topic or for future learning.
Controversy with Civility

- Challenging “Agree to Disagree”
- Conflict is natural.
- Conflict as a tool.
- Result: Strengthen the community/group.
Own Your Intentions and Impact

- “Don’t take things personally” is harmful.
- Inevitability of missteps.
- Less Fear, More Honesty
- Increased awareness of harmful statements.
- How and Why
Choose to Challenge Yourself

- Learning risks are healthy.
- Don’t Force It.
- Encourage engagement to spur the conversation.
- Motive to challenge → Privilege in conversation.
The Golden Rule(ish)

- Respect others as they wish to be respected.
- Teachers and pros have been drilling us with this FOREVER.
- How does someone demonstrate respect for you?
NO ad hominem Attacks

- ‘ad hominem’ = directed against a person rather than the position they are maintaining.
- Clarify conversations.
Now You Try!

- Activity Time!
  - Working in small groups.
  - Consider one of the Brave Space Guidelines
  - Create a roleplay that shows how this guideline can be applied to a peer support group or workshop that we already facilitate.
  - Be sure to include everyone in your group and win a prize from Grant!
How We Can Improve

What is 1 or 2 professional or personal goals you have for increasing LGBT inclusion in disability services in your community?

For each goal, what can you do to accomplish this in the next…

- 4 minutes
- 4 days
- 4 weeks
- 4 months
Awareness & Visibility

- LGBTQ Disability Day (June 27)
- Disability After Dark podcast: Sex & Disability by Andrew Gurza
- Out to Access: Scottish project that focuses on the intersections of disability with gender identity and sexual orientation.
Resources/Videos

- **White House Forum On LGBT and Disability Issues**: June 2016
- **Trans Student Educational Resources**: Creators of Gender Unicorn
- **FLASH Curriculum**: Sexuality Education for Special Education
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