Overview

While we have seen significant sociopolitical gains for the North American Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Transgender / Queer / Asexual (LGBTQA) community in recent years, work toward fair treatment and healthy development of all individuals is ongoing. Involvement of non-LGBTQA-identified individuals is crucial to the advancement of this work. Many higher education professionals wish to support LGBTQA students, but feel they lack the resources to do so. In this Web Event, sponsored by the NACADA Commission for LGBTQA Advising and Advocacy, our panelists will discuss ally development, advocacy, and engagement, and their application to academic advising. They will consider what the advising literature has explored regarding the needs of LGBTQA-identified students, ally development models, potential roles and responsibilities for allies, and more.

Pre-Webcast Reading Suggestions


Suggestions for Post-Webinar Reflection and Discussion

The following situations will be introduced in the webinar and are recommended for further reflection and discussion following the broadcast:

- A trans student walks in – the name is Shane on the official student record, yet checks in as Shawna and is dressed in women’s clothing.
- Two same-sex students, who are roommates on campus, walk into your office and ask you to help them through a relationship problem.
- A student comes out to you OR asks you advice on how to come out to their roommate/parents/friends.
The following Activity/Reflections suggestions will be introduced in the webinar and are recommended for further reflection and discussion following the broadcast:

1. Choose one of your Social Identities (e.g. Gender, Ethnicity, Skin color, First language, Age, Ability status, Religion, Sexual orientation).
2. Think about what you have learned in terms of how you were taught “to be” a person from this social category.
3. As we talk about the Cycle of Socialization, think about this aspect of your identity and what you have been taught about it.

What do all the letters mean?*

*Thanks to The University of Michigan’s International Spectrum for giving us permission to share their definitions. Find the original list at http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions

**LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQA, TBLG: These acronyms refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual, and Ally. Although all of the different identities within “LGBT” are often lumped together (and share sexism as a common root of oppression), there are specific needs and concerns related to each individual identity.**

**Lesbian:** A homosexual woman.

**Gay:** A homosexual person, usually used to describe men but may be used to describe women as well.

**Bisexual:** A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to more than one gender. Also called “bi”.

**Transgender:** This term has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who deviate from their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system. This includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, genderqueers, drag kings, drag queens, two-spirit people, and others. Some transgender people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond or outside of those two genders.

**Queer:** Used as an umbrella identity term encompassing lesbian, questioning people, gay men, bisexuals, non-labeling people, transgender folks, and anyone else who does not strictly identify as heterosexual. “Queer” originated as a derogatory word. Currently, it is being reclaimed by some people and used as a statement of empowerment. Some people identify as “queer” to distance themselves from the rigid categorization of “straight” and “gay”. Some transgender, lesbian, gay, questioning, non-labeling, and bisexual people, however, reject the use of this term due to its connotations of deviance and its tendency to gloss over and sometimes deny the differences between these groups.

**Asexual:** A term used for a person who does not experience sexual attraction.

**Heterosexual:** A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted and committed to the members of a gender or sex that is seen to be the “opposite” or other than the one with which they identify or are identified. Also called “straight”.

**Homosexual:** A clinical term that originated in the late 1800s. Some avoid the word because it contains the base word “sex.” The terms “lesbian, bi and gay” are preferred by many in the LGBT community.

**Ally:** An ally is a person who is a member of the dominant group who works to end oppression in his or her own personal and professional life by supporting and advocating with the oppressed population.
Gender and Gender Expression

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity and expression matches the gender typically associated with their biological sex. For example: a female who identifies as a woman.

**Gender expression:** Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice and emphasizing, de-emphasizing or changing their body’s characteristics. Gender expression is not necessarily an indication of sexual orientation.

**Gender identity:** The sense of “being” male or “being” female. For some people, gender identity is in accord with physical anatomy. For transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are not necessarily linked.

**Phobias**

**Biphobia:** The fear or hatred of bisexual people. This term addresses the ways that prejudice against bisexuals differs from prejudice against other queer people. There is often biphobia in lesbian, gay and transgender communities, as well as in straight communities.

**Transphobia:** The fear or hatred of transgender people or gender non-conforming behavior. Like biphobia, transphobia can also exist among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people as well as among heterosexual people.

**Homophobia:** Thoughts, feelings, or actions based on far, dislike, judgment, or hatred of lesbians, gays and bisexuals. Homophobia has roots in sexism and can include prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence.

**Additional LGBTQIA Terms and Definitions**

**Coming Out:** To declare and affirm both to oneself and to others one’s identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, etc. It is not a single event but instead a life-long process.

**Genderqueer:** A term which refers to individuals or groups who “queer” or problematize the hegemonic notions of sex, gender and desire in a given society. Genderqueer people possess identities which fall outside of the widely accepted sexual binary. Genderqueer may also refer to people who identify as both transgendered AND queer, i.e. individuals who challenge both gender and sexuality regimes and see gender identity and sexual orientation as overlapping and interconnected.

**In the closet:** To be in the closet means to hide one’s LGBT identity in order to avoid negative social repercussions, such as losing a job, housing, friends or family. Many LGBT individuals are “out” in some situations and “closeted” in others, based on their perceived level of safety.

**Sexual orientation:** A person’s emotional, physical and sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction with other individuals. Some of the better-known labels or categories include “bisexual” (or “multisexual”, “pansexual”, “omnisexual”), “lesbian”, “gay” (“homosexual” is more clinical), or “heterosexual”.

**Transsexual:** A person who, through experiencing an intense, long-term discomfort resulting from feeling the inappropriateness of their assigned gender at birth and discomfort of their body, adapts their gender role and body to reflect and be congruent with their gender identity.
Please Note: It is very important to respect people’s desired self-identifications. One should never assume another person’s identity based on that person’s appearance. It is always best to ask people how they identify, including what pronouns they prefer, and to respect their wishes.

Definitions have been modified from the following websites:
http://lesbianlife.about.com/od/trans/g/GenderExpression.htm
http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/advise/perspective.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homophobia
http://asexuality.org/home/overview.html

References and Recommended Resources


Joslin, J. (2007). Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students. In P. Jordan & L. Huff (Eds.), *Advising special populations*, Monograph # 17 (pp. 87-95). Manhattan, KS: NACADA.


LGBTQA Ally Development and Advocacy Empowerment for Academic Advisors

A Panel Discussion
While we have seen significant sociopolitical gains for the North American Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Transgender / Queer / Asexual (LGBTQA) community in recent years, work toward fair treatment and healthy development of all individuals is ongoing. Involvement of non-LGBTQA-identified individuals is crucial to the advancement of this work. Many higher education professionals wish to support LGBTQA students, but feel they lack the resources to do so. In this Web Event, sponsored by the NACADA Commission for LGBTQA Advising and Advocacy, our panelists will discuss ally development, advocacy, and engagement, and their application to academic advising. They will consider what the advising literature has explored regarding the needs of LGBTQA-identified students, ally development models, potential roles and responsibilities for allies, and more.

What do LGBTQ students need?

What do Advisors need to meet the needs of these students?

What do all the letters mean?
LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQA, TBLG: These acronyms refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual, and Ally. Although all of the different identities within “LGBT” are often lumped together (and share sexism as a common root of oppression), there are specific needs and concerns related to each individual identity.

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual (“bi”)
- Transgender
- Queer
- Asexual
- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
Heternormativity explains how our society revolves around heterosexual norms and assumptions.

Phobias

- Biphobia
- Transphobia
- Homophobia

Cisgender

Gender expression is not necessarily an indication of sexual orientation.

Gender identity

It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are not necessarily linked.

Heterosexism

"The bias that heterosexuality is superior to, or more natural than, homosexuality or bisexuality" (Forrest, 2006)

Assuming student has parents of different sexes

Heterosexual couples used in commercials and advertisements

Using opposite sex language for couples (asking a young lady if she has a boyfriend)

Heterosexual Privilege

The basic civil rights and social privileges that a heterosexual individual automatically receives, but are systematically denied to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons on the sole basis of their sexual orientation.

- Expressing pain when a relationship ends, and having other people notice, empathize, and tend to your pain.
- Discussing freely about romantic desires or crushes.
- Being employed as a teacher (or in another profession) without the fear of being fired at any time because of your orientation.

Heterosexism and Homophobia hurt LGBTQ students

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are in the closet</th>
<th>Who are coming out</th>
<th>Who are already out of the closet</th>
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Marriage/Civil Unions defined differently by each state/country
“People from privileged groups are routinely denied information and opportunities to understand their role in an unjust social system as well as honest feedback from people in oppressed groups”

*Torres et al., (2003)*

**Jackson/Hardiman (1982)**

- Social Identity Development Model
- Based on models of learning/unlearning oppression and racial/gender identity development
- Assumption: Oppression is a learned phenomenon

**Chojnacki and Gelberg (1995)**

Confusion → Comparison → Tolerance → Acceptance → Pride → Integration

**Criticisms**

- Of all stage models: implication that identity is achieved
- Allyhood is cyclical and ongoing
- Models have received no validation through empirical research
The Beginning
- Born into a world of pre-existing structures
  - Identity is ascribed to us through no action of our own
  - We have no consciousness of who we are
- Dominant/Agent Groups — “the Norm”
  - Assumptions build around them
  - Possess Social Power
  - Privileged, often without awareness
- Subordinate/Target Groups
  - Often defined by misinformation
  - Invisible
  - Disenfranchised, exploited, victimized

First Socialization
- First socialized by people we love and trust;
  They shape our:
  ✓ self-concepts
  ✓ self-perceptions
  ✓ norms and rules we follow,
  ✓ roles we are taught to play
  ✓ expectations for the future
- Socialization occurs both Intrapersonally and Interpersonally
- Those who raise us aren’t to be blamed

ACTIVITY
1. Choose one of your Social Identities (e.g. Gender, Ethnicity, Skin color, First language, Age, Ability status, Religion, Sexual orientation).
2. Think about what you have learned in terms of how you were taught “to be” a person from this social category.
3. As we talk about the Cycle of Socialization, think about this aspect of your identity and what you have been taught about it.

Institutional/Cultural Socialization
- Begin learning messages from cultural institutions (e.g. church, school, medical facility, grocery stores)
  - This is where we learn most
- Agent groups who benefit from messages may not consciously recognize them; Target groups feel discomfort
- Messages present in every sector of our lives
Enforcements

- People who conform to status quo:
  - left alone, considered normal; A ‘team player’
  - Agent groups continue to receive privilege/rewards

- People who contradict status quo:
  - pay a price; stirring the waves is seen as trouble-making
  - if members of target group, held up as examples of why group is inferior;
  - if members of agent group, seen as causing trouble or suspected of belonging to the identity category

Results

- Impact on Target groups:
  - Experience: anger, frustration, mistrust, being silenced, and a dissonance
  - Resulting in: Low self-esteem, stress, hopelessness/disempowerment → crime, self-destructive behavior, and dehumanization.
  - “internalized oppression”

- Impact on Agent groups:
  - guilt from unearned privilege or oppressive actions;
  - fear of payback;
  - Stress;
  - distorted view of world;
  - obliviousness to the damage we do

Action

- Once we become aware of oppression, we can’t go back to not knowing about it.
- What do we do about it?
  - Easiest to do nothing → upholds status quo
  - Challenging status quo feel daunting
  - If an agent, might seem irrelevant
  - Insecure about our ability to ability to make a difference
- Cycle will continue unless it is interrupted:
  - “Our silence is our consent” (Harro, 1996, p. 20)
  - If our core is filled with negative elements, we re-create the cycle

Direction for Change

- What does it take to interrupt the cycle?
  - For target groups, experience of more discomfort than comfort
- What is needed?
  - Targets are reliant upon agent allies to make change
  - Agent might decide to use power/privilege to make change
    - Motivation for doing so is key;
      - If acting because of guilt, likely to fail
      - Acting with a vision of injustice to form a coalition

Queering Allyhood: Identity Categories

- Where do lines get drawn?
- On what basis?
- Who decides?
- Implications: for those inside, outside & on margins

Queering Allyhood: Identity Categories

- Homogenize shared identities
- Erase differences
- Privilege those who best achieve norms
- Marginalize those who fail to achieve norms
Queering Allyhood: Intersectionality

“With identity thus reconceptualized [through the recognition of intersectionality], it might be easier to understand the need to summon up the courage to challenge groups that are after all, in one sense, ‘home’ to us, in the name of the parts of us that are made not at home. . . . to speak against internal exclusions and marginalizations, that we might call attention to how the identity of ‘the group’ has been centered on the intersectional identities of a few.”

—Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins”

Queering Allyhood: Intersectionality

- Identity as multiple and intersecting
- Oppressive practices as interconnected
- Our different identities overlay and define each other
- Privilege is not a monolithic experience

Queering Allyhood: Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a tool for queer theory:
- challenging the unity/coherence of binary identity categories
- conceptualizing identity as multiple, fluid, and existing on a continuum
- opening the door for new identities to enter

Queering Allyhood: Doing Ally

- Ally as something we do rather than something we are
- Allyhood as fluid and incomplete
- Allyhood is for everybody
- A shared commitment to challenging privileging and normalizing practices and to fighting all forms of oppression

(Katz, 1978; McIntosh, 1998; Washington & Evans, 1991)
Threat of being perceived as LGBT may echo experience of being LGBT. Employment may be in jeopardy.

**Strategies for Being an Ally**

- **Education**
  - Learn about ally development
  - Ask Questions
  - Don’t rely on LGBT people to know everything

- **Patience**
  - It will take time and mistakes!

**Roles for Allies**

- Support
- Education
- Advocacy

**Now... a little self reflection**

Think about how would you feel in the following situations?

- A trans student walks in – the name is Shane on the official student record, yet checks in as Shawna and is dressed in women’s clothing.
- Two same-sex students, who are roommates on campus, walk into your office and ask you to help them through a relationship problem.
- A student comes out to you or asks you advice on how to come out to their roommate/parents/friends.

There are no right or wrong answers...just reflect.

**Questions?**