Tools for Working with LGBTQ2S Youth and their Families
Children’s Mental Health Grand Rounds
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Goals for Presentation

- Understand your role
- Basic Language overview, how to ask about identity
- How to facilitate coming out with youth and families
- How to facilitate maintaining confidentiality for youth
- How to facilitate advocating for youth’s identity
- How to facilitate youth’s understanding of support with biological and named family

Your Role

- To provide quality services for all youth and families
- Ensure the health and safety of youth
- Follow best practices
- Look to the NASW, APA, AMA
Biological Sex
Physical body; internal and external reproductive organs, hormone levels, chromosomes and sexual characteristics.

Words we use to describe biological sex:
- Male
- Female
- Intersex
- Transsexual
- Questioning
- Transitioning

Gender Identity
How a person, in their head and heart, understands their identity. (different than biological sex)
Gender Identity

Words we use to describe gender identity:
- Girl/ Woman
- Boy/Man
- Transgender
- Gender Queer
- Fluid
- Questioning

Gender Expression

How one demonstrates their gender based on traditional gender roles, dress, body language, voice, behavior and interactions.

Gender Expression

Words we use to describe gender expression:
- Masculine
- Feminine
- Androgynous
- Fluid
- Gender Queer
Gender Expression Examples

Example 1 = read as feminine
Person in America
Around 2010

Example 2 = read as masculine
Person in Scotland
Around 2010

Examples 1 and 2: same time + different communities = different reads on similar gender expression
Gender Expression Examples

Example 3 = read as masculine

Person in America

Around 1776

Example 4 = read as feminine

Person in America

Around 2010

Examples 3 and 4: Different Time + Same community = different reads on similar gender expression
Sexual/ Attractional Orientation

Who an individual is spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, sexually attracted to based on their sex/gender in relation to their own.

Sexual/ Attractional Orientation

Words we use to describe:
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual/biattractional
- Pansexual
- Questioning
- Heterosexual
- Queer
- Asexual
- Fluid

Sexual Activity

Actions associated with sexual intercourse and/or sexual arousal.

Photo from a sex education Comic, “Not Your Mother’s Meatloaf.”
Sexual Activity

Words we use to name:

- Anal Intercourse
- Vaginal Intercourse
- Oral Intercourse
- Outercourse
- None

Coming Out

- Safety when coming out is unfortunately a serious concern. Many youth face physical violence, being kicked out or other traumatic events when first coming out
- Opportunity for a vulnerable moment to be meaningful and healthy
- Supporting coming out by offering space in your facility or presence if the youth is interested
“Coming Out Analysis” Guidelines

- We can NEVER recommend that a person does or does not come out
- Coming out or not coming out must be the individual’s choice
- Our role is to help youth understand the possible benefits and risks so they make an informed decision
- Always make sure you have facilitated a safety plan with a young person before they come out

Identity Safe Spaces

- Safety is paramount, outing someone can be dangerous
- Fluid Identity calls for respecting how identity and space might interact
- Respecting gradual process of sharing self, knowing that there are complicated reasons for deciding to come out or not
“Identity Safe Spaces” Guidelines

- Ensure this document is private if youth requests
- Youth can be self-conscious about sharing differences in spaces
- It is important to share that having differences in spaces is not bad, it could be related to safety, fluid identity or not being ready to come out to certain people

Name Cards
- Use with doctors, health professionals, teachers, etc.
- Quick, confidential, documentation of notification
- Tools for conversation if identity is not respected repeatedly
“Name Cards” Guidance

- Never use without the youth’s permission
- Ask the youth how they would like you to utilize it
- Consider the setting and if using the name card will need to be or could be shared with the guardian
- Know that it is the youth’s right to use the name card when they are being directly served, but you will want them to do a cost benefit analysis

Spectrum of Reactions

- People’s reactions are complicated and ever changing
- Rare that people fall into the “hate” or “celebration” categories
- Ambiguity can be especially difficult for youth
“Spectrum of Reactions” Guidance

- Use as a psycho-educational tool about where people might be, that people might go up and down or change
- Use to assess how youth understand people in their lives, to help them understand complexity
- Use to set IPOS goals related to building permanent connections with people who “Celebrate” their identity
- Postpone use in a situation where you are certain that a young person doesn’t have anyone in their life above the “tolerant” part of the spectrum