SUPPORTING LGBTQIA+ CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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FOUNDATIONS

• Queer theory- a belief system that challenges the idea that sexuality or gender is on a binary and that being different is pathological
  • Cultural constructs organizes what is allowed and not allowed
• Prejudice-preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience
• Privilege-a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group
  • Heterosexism-assumption that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation.
• 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.
**TERMINOLOGY**

- **Sex**
  - Our biological sex-"sex assigned at birth"
  - Physical body, anatomy (penis or vagina), internal reproductive characteristics, chromosomes
- **Intersex**
  - Ambiguous genitalia or differing chromosomal combination

**Gender Expression**

- How we express our gendered identity (male, female or neither)
  - Clothing
  - Hairstyle
  - Physical Mannerism
  - Activities
  - Daily Roles
  - Career
TERMINOLOGY

Gender Identity
• Internal sense of who you are-man, woman, both, neither
  • Cisgender versus transgender
  • Crossdresser
  • Gender queer (fluid, variant, expansive, diverse, nonconforming)
  • Bigender
  • Agender
  • Pangender
• Pronouns-he/she/zie/hir/they/them

Sexual Orientation
• Who you are attracted to
  • Heterosexual
  • Lesbian
  • Gay
  • Bisexual
  • Pansexual
  • Gender expression
**TERMINOLOGY**

**What about that Q?**
- Questioning or…
- Queer
  - Past slur that has been reclaimed by the urban community
  - Can encompass everyone or describe one’s expression, orientation, or identity

**LGBTQ IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

1. Sensitization
2. Identity Confusion
3. Identity Assumption
4. Commitment
MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO SEXUAL IDENTITY

Sexual Identity

Self-Construct (self-others)

Individual Meaning

Life Experience

EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

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EDUCATIONAL TOOLS: BOOKS

- **The Gender Unicorn**
  - Graphic by: TSER
  - Design by Landyn Pan
  - To learn more go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

- **Who are you?**
  - by Brook Pessin-Whedbee
  - Illustrated by Naomi Bardoff
  - The kid's guide to gender identity
  - Includes activities and discussion questions
EDUCATIONAL TOOLS: BOOKS

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LGBTQ: The Survival Guide for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens
Kelly Huegel Madrone

GENDER DEVELOPMENT

• Early Childhood
  • 2-3-gender identity identified-can identify toys by gender, seek out same gender role models
  • 3-4 Aware of anatomy
  • 4-6-Use of gender scripts and constructs
  • 6-7 -Gender is stable
• Pre teen early Adolescence
  • 9-12-Identity stabilizes, beginning of puberty
• Adolescence
  • Hormonal changes, social anxiety and dating
GENDER DYSPHORIA

- Distress due to incongruence between assigned gender and experienced or expressed gender for at least six months.
- Desire to be or stating that one is the other gender
- Preference for other gender clothing and resist wearing assigned gender clothing
- Preference for other gender roles in play, toys, games, activities and other gender playmate.
- Dislike of one’s gendered body parts and behaviors (anatomy, deeper voice)
- Desire to not have primary and secondary sexual characteristics, prevent secondary characteristics
- Typical feelings/behaviors of other gender
- Distress is seen in school, socially, important areas

TRANSGENDER YOUTH

- Working with transgender youth is a specialty area
  - Nonspecialist + resources
    - Gender identity/expression
    - Education
    - Resources
  - Refer out to a specialist
    - Gender evaluation (consultation)
    - Little expertise or education
    - High levels of gender dysphoria
    - Wanting to live as another gender
    - Compulsive behaviors
    - Preexisting condition
    - Highly rejecting family
    - Medical transition (consultation)
COMING OUT

- Assessment
- Secrets
- Safety
- Support/Resources
- Use identified names and pronouns
- Open, affirming questions
- When to disclose as a therapist?
  - Safety/self-harm
- Planning

Educational tools:
Books

The Gender Quest Workbook: A Guide for Teens and Young Adult Exploring Gender Identity
Rylan Testa, Deborah Coolhart, Jayme Peta
Educational Resources:

The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals
Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper

The Transgender Teen: A Handbook for Parents and Professionals Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Teens
Stephanie Brill and Lisa Kenney
Educational Resources:

Trans Kids and Teens: Pride, Joy, and Families in Transition
Elijah C. Nealy

CREATING AN AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENT

• Name/gender/pronoun preference verbally and on forms
• Educate front desk/other staff
• Books, signage, symbols
• PRACTICE
• If you make a mistake...
FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT

- Evidence and strengths based family intervention
- Family reactions-Highly rejecting to accepting
- Rejecting families-lessens over time
- Most families want the best for their children
- Caregivers are critical to the well being of LGBTQ children

FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Rejection Health Risks</th>
<th>Family Acceptance Protection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Suicidal attempts</td>
<td>• Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Depression</td>
<td>• Suicidal behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illegal drug use</td>
<td>• Substance Use</td>
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<td>• Unprotected sex</td>
<td>• Self Esteem</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Social Support</td>
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<td>• Physical Health</td>
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FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT

• What is our role?
  • Increasing family support of the LGBT+ youth
  • Goals-change rejecting behaviors and increase supportive behaviors
  • Provide-education, guidance, and support
  • Build an alliance with the family
  • NOT-changing values or beliefs

FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT

• Assumptions
  • Families love their children, future ideas are shaped by culture
  • Meet each family where they are
  • Families need to be heard and understood
  • Rejections motivation is care and concern
  • Behaviors are understood in a cultural context.
  • Most important change agent-understanding the consequences of rejection
  • Families experience feelings of inadequacy, shame and loss.
  • Rejection plus acceptance leads to ambivalence. Ambivalence leads to less support and increased risk.
FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT

• Specific Interventions
  • Education
    • Terminology
    • Gender identity
    • Consequences of family rejection
    • Ambivalence
    • What does support look like and how does it effect health?
• Creating a supportive, nonjudgmental container for the family
  • Creating space for the parents’ story
  • Developing supportive behaviors in the family

SUPPORTIVE THERAPY

• Process feelings-anger, fear, and loss
• Developing how disclosure will occur
• Helping navigate the school environment
• Parental support groups
• Pacing therapeutic work
SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIORS

• Do you discuss your child’s identity, gender, attractions?
• What information do you display verbally and non-verbally?
• Do you encourage your child’s expression?
• How do you react when people misgender your child?
• Do you ask your child about their queer community?
• Are you interested in your child’s goals?

SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIORS

• Do you use your child’s pronouns, preferred name?
• Do you encourage others to use their preferred name and pronouns?
• How do you show love to your child?
• Are you loving in front of others toward your child?
• Have you researched information about queer life?
Educational Resources:

LGBTQ+ Youth: A Guided Workbook to Support Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
Lee-Anne Gray

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?

- Assessing how affirming is the school environment
- Deciding on social transition
- Meeting with school staff
  - Education
  - Name
  - Pronouns
  - Dress Code
  - Restrooms/Locker rooms
  - Group Sports
- Privacy
- Safety Plans
- Allies
WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AT SCHOOL?

Title IX is a federal law that makes sex discrimination illegal in most schools. Most courts decisions have held that this includes discrimination against someone because they are transgender or gender diverse

• Treated according to your gender identity.
• Called by the name and pronouns that match your gender identity.
• Not to be bullied or harassed because you are transgender or gender non-conforming.
• Use of restrooms and locker rooms that match your gender identity.
• Same opportunities to learn and participate in school life as anyone else.
• Right to dress and present yourself according to your gender identity
• Privacy and choice about who you tell or don’t tell about being transgender.
• Join or start an LGBT student club like a GSA or Pride Alliance

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS IN OHIO?

• Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is not banned statewide
• Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is banned federally for employment
• Conversion therapy is also banned in a number of cities
RESOURCES

- **Trevor Project** (Call, Text, or Chat): For queer youth struggling with thoughts of suicide or self-harm, or needing a judgement-free space to talk: 1-866-488-7386
- **Trans Lifeline**: Peer support hotline ran by and for trans people: 877-565-8860
- **Franklin County Youth Psychiatric Crisis Line** (for ages 17 and under): 614-722-1800
- **GLSEN**: [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org): GLSEN works to create safe schools for all LGBTQ people, primarily students.
- Kaleidoscope Youth Center [https://www.kycohio.org/](https://www.kycohio.org/): provides FREE daily programming from 3:30pm - 7pm Monday-Thursday, and 3:30pm - 8pm Friday for queer youth ages 12-20 in Central Ohio.

REFERENCES

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THE END, THANK YOU!

Please direct questions or concerns to:
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