LGBTQ+ Youth Cultural Competency Training
Who are we?

- An inclusive youth group with youth ages 12-20
- Meets twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Frequent special events, trainings, discussions, and volunteer outings
- Youth-led with an active leadership group
  - Presenters are from the Education and Training Committee
Agenda

- Presentation
  - Binary vs. Spectrum
  - LGBTQ+ Folks Through History
  - Terms and Definitions
  - Intersectionality
  - Ways to Support LGBTQ+ Youth

- Q&A (as time allows)

- Youth will be far more likely to participate and engage in a space where they feel safe and comfortable. Cultural competency is vital for serving your clients effectively
Binaries vs Spectrums

Gender is less like this:

And more like this:
Who Do You Think This Is?
Gender Historically and Globally

- The systemic normalization of cisgender identities may make others seem unusual, “made up” or “less important”

- Keep in mind that historically those who challenged traditional gender roles were often judicially, violently, or socially persecuted, leaving no room for nonbinary/trans identities to be visible
Significant Events in LGBTQ+ History in the U.S.A.

- American Psychiatric Association (APA) concludes homosexuality is not a mental illness, removed from DSM (1973)
- Lawrence v. Texas Decision first decision by Supreme Court to abolish sodomy laws in 12 states (2003)
- The APA changed the DSM-V from Gender Identity Disorder to Gender Identity Dysphoria (2013)
- Executive Order 10450, allows for firing of government employees on basis of “sexual perversion” (1953) (revoked in 1995)
- Ban placed on HIV positive folks immigrating to the US (1987) (revoked in 2009)
- Obama issued memorandum on hospital visitation rights for gay couples (2010)
LGBTQ+ Terms and Definitions
Biological Sex

- Biological Sex correlates to your genitalia, hormones, and chromosomal makeup.

- While biological sex may be necessary to talk about in medical conversations, it does not dictate someone’s gender identity.
  - Example: A person can have XY chromosomes and not be male in any way.

- “I do feel like there’s a preoccupation with [trans bodies and surgeries] and I think that the preoccupation with transition and surgery objectifies trans people and then we don’t get to really deal with the real, lived experiences.” -Laverne Cox
Biological Sex

- Intersex is a term used for people who are born with naturally occurring variations in chromosomes, hormones, genitalia, and other sex characteristics.

- Intersex people are about as common as redheads at about 2% of the population.

- Intersex babies are often subjected to non-consensual surgeries that can lead to problems later on.
General Overview of Gender and Sexuality

- **Gender Identity**
  - Cisgender, Transgender, Non-binary

- **Gender Expression**
  - Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous

- **Sexual Orientation**
  - Gay, Straight, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual

- **Romantic Orientation**
  - Gay, Straight, Biromantic, Panromantic, Aromatic

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
Pronouns replace a person’s name in a sentence, and in English, the pronouns we use are he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, etc.

It is important to normalize asking for pronouns in various settings to make trans and non-binary youth feel more comfortable in the spaces you are in with them.

They/Them are generally accepted gender neutral pronouns.

If you don’t know someone’s pronouns default to they until you have asked them.
Looking at Intersectionality
Intersectionality

- The term intersectionality is used to describe the compounding effects of multiple oppressed identities that combine to create experiences different than each individual component
  - This term was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, a critical race theorist at UCLA
  - Example of Intersectionality

- Diversity vs. Intersectionality

- People with multiple marginalized identities often experience more discrimination
LGBTQ+ Youth Climate and Intersectionality

- LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk for harm than their cisgender and heterosexual peers, but LGBTQ+ youth with multiple marginalized identities are at even higher risk for harm
  - LGBTQ+ youth represented disproportionately in homeless youth populations (~40%)
  - LGBTQ+ homeless youth disproportionately tend to be youth of color
  - High murder rate of trans women of color, especially young trans women of color

- If we create a safe space for the “most marginalized” person, the space should be safe for everyone
Ways to Support LGBTQ+ Youth
Create Safe Environments

- Be a visible ally (either environmentally or verbally) to show that you are supportive

- Gender inclusive bathrooms will make LGBTQ+ folks feel more comfortable in your office

- Solicit feedback and learn from mistakes

- It is vital for youth to know that their feedback is important and heard, so make changes based on it
Safety Over Discomfort

- A youth’s personal safety should always be top priority. Everyone should be safe before everyone is comfortable.

- This comes over the discomfort of other youth, parents, and yourself.

- Discomfort is a feeling of unease, but does not put someone in the direct line of harm, whereas a lack of safety does.
LGBTQ+ Identities Are Not the Root of Mental Health Problems

● Varying gender identities & sexual orientations are not the cause of mental health problems

● Instead, societal and environmental discrimination can cause mental health concerns

● Assuming someone’s mental health problem is a symptom of their LGBTQ+ identity is quick way to alienate a client and make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe in your space
Conversion Therapy

- Conversion therapy never succeeds in anything but causing major psychological damage
  - Increases in negative outcomes (such as suicidality and self harm)
- Almost every major psychological institution has condemned conversion therapy
- Instead, research, advocate for, and practice therapy strategies that affirm and validate gender identities and sexual orientations
Practicing Outside of Your Competency

- Understanding the experience of the client is important, however not having the basic knowledge of the language the client is using will cause issues.

- If you encounter a client with an identity you are unfamiliar with, seek supervision or refer your client to another provider with expertise.

- If you are unaware of how to, or uncomfortable with providing referrals or other basic care for LGBTQ+ clients then you should not be seeing them.
  - Example: letters for medical transition.
Ally Pitfalls

For a lot of LGBTQ+ youth, especially in rural and isolated communities, an adult ally can be the only source of support in their lives

- Oversimplifying and erasing the struggles they face and not validating their experiences

- Conditional Allyship

- Being an open minded person does not ensure culturally competent, or are an appropriate service provider for LGBTQ+ folks

- Discounting youth identities because they are young
Being an Ally vs. Being an Advocate

● An ally is more of a passive supporter, whereas an advocate is an active participant

● LGBTQ+ youth aren’t always able or allowed to advocate for themselves

● While it’s important to be an advocate, it’s also essential that you ground your advocacy in the experiences of the LGBTQ+ youth you are advocating for

● When possible, elevate voices of LGBTQ+ youth over your own voice
Learn on Your Own

- Learning is a lifelong opportunity, it is important to keep yourself open to new content and criticism from LGBTQ+ folks

- Gathering multiple sources on any given topic leads to a more comprehensive understanding

- Learning on your own ensures the focus is on the youth’s needs and not on educating you
  - Seek continuing education on how to support LGBTQ+ clients
Things Youth Want You To Take Away

● Youth will be far more likely to participate and engage in a space where they feel safe and comfortable

● Cultural competency is vital for serving your clients effectively

● Following these suggestions can help empower and encourage youth to thrive
Contact Information and Panel

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Instagram: PrismYouthCommunity
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