LGBTQ Issues & Addressing Bullying/Harassment in the Classroom

Erica Lennon, Psy.D. & Jessica Groleau, B.A.

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Counseling Center

Terminology

- LGBTQ

- Queer

- Trans

Bullying Statistics

- Nearly 1 in 3 students (27.8%) report being bullied during the school year

- Students who experience bullying are at increased risk for:
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Sleep difficulties
  - Substance use
  - Academic difficulties
  - Violence in adolescence and adulthood
  - Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches, etc.)

Bullying and Queer Youth

- **81.9%** of students who identify as LGBTQ were bullied in the last year based on their sexual orientation

- 31.8% of LGBTQ students missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe

- The average secondary school student hears an anti-gay slur **26 times** a day.

- **One in four** teens who come out face family rejection. Family rejection significantly increases risk of depression, suicide, and risky behavior.

- **30-40%** of the nation's homeless youth are Queer teenagers.

- Queer youth are **2-6x** more likely to attempt suicide.

*Statistics from the National Bullying Prevention Center (http://www.pacer.org/bullying/about/media-kit/stats.asp)

The Broader System

- Schools operate as part of an ecological system (family, media, friends, neighborhoods)

- Null Environment

- Systemic approaches
  - Displaying affirming posters ("safe space")
  - School-wide initiatives (Day of Silence)
  - Highlighting/advertising GSA presence

The Classroom Environment

- Creating safe and affirming classroom space
  - Addressing derogatory language
  - Using open/neutral language
  - Setting expectations from DAY ONE
  - Lesson plans on bullying, gender, and family

- Religious beliefs conflict
  - Legal responsibility in role
    - NC General Statute 155C-407
  - NEA Code of Ethics & AAE Code of Ethics
    - makes a constructive/reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions detrimental/harmful to learning, health, or safety.

Individual Incidents

- If witness, **STOP** the behavior immediately

- **EDUCATE**: Use as a teachable moment

- Attend to specific target of behavior
  - Validation
  - Connection to resources

Resources

GSAs:
- **Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN**)
- **Gay-Straight Alliance Network**
- **Lambda Legal**
- **iNSIDEoUT**
- **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU**)

Lesson Plans and Curriculum
- **Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN):**
- **Teaching Tolerance**
- **Welcoming Schools through the HRC**
- **Thinkb4youspeak**
- **Safe Schools Coalition**
- **National Educators Association (NEA) GLBT Caucus**

Resources

- http://www.welcomingschools.org/educators

- http://www.welcomingschools.org/bullying-name-calling