The Ethics of Being an Ally to the LGBTQ+ Community

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Training Objectives

Objective 1: Participants will understand the ethical obligation social workers have of advocating for and being an ally to vulnerable populations such as the LGBTQ+ community.

Objective 2: Participants will learn about the LGBTQ+ community and discuss developing safe spaces for clients who identify as LGBTQ+.

Objective 3: Participants will become more informed and effective allies to the LGBTQ+ community through information sharing, reflective exercises, and interactive activities.
Gender Pronouns

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There are an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. Always ask someone for their pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
<th>Reflexive</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>Her</td>
<td>Hers</td>
<td>Herself</td>
<td>She is speaking. I listened to her. The backpack is hers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>Him</td>
<td>His</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>He is speaking. I listened to him. The backpack is his.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>Them</td>
<td>Theirs</td>
<td>Themselves</td>
<td>They are speaking. I listened to them. The backpack is theirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze</td>
<td>Hir/Zir</td>
<td>Hirs/Zirs</td>
<td>Hirself/Zirself</td>
<td>Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The backpack is zirs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, go to transstudent.org/graphics

Design by Landyn Pan

transstudent.tumblr.com
facebook.com/transstudent
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TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources
1.05 Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity

(a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
1976, the Task Force on Gay Issues was created
1979, the Task Force was restructured as an authorized committee of the Association
1982, NASW Board of Directors formed the National Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues
“Bisexual and “Transgender” were added by the Delegate Assembly in 1996 and 2005 respectively and it became the National Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues

*The Committee was established to enable NASW to further the cause of social justice by promoting and defending the rights of persons suffering injustices and oppression because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.*
The practice of Counseling, Social Work and Marriage and Family Therapy does not include sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE, also sometimes referred to as “conversion therapy”) or efforts to change gender identity. Attempts to “change” sexual orientation or gender identity can be harmful, particularly when the client is a minor.

Licensees should be aware that the Board can discipline licensees (up to and including license revocation) when they use a practice or intervention that results in harm to a client.
How You See Me
First Impressions

1. When’s the first time you can remember learning that some people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer?

2. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)

3. What kind of representation (race, gender, nationality, etc.) of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people have you seen?

4. When’s the first time you can remember learning that some people are transgender?

5. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of transgender people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)

6. How have your impressions/understanding of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning) people changed or evolved throughout your life?
Core Vocabulary

• Review vocabulary for 2-4 minutes
• Place a star next to:
  – Terms you have never heard
  – Terms you have heard but don’t fully understand
  – Terms you have questions about
  – Terms you think have too limited definitions
LGBTQ is an acronym meant to encompass a whole bunch of diverse sexualities and genders. Folks often refer to the Q (standing for "queer*") as an umbrella term, under which live a whole bunch of identities. This is helpful because lesbian, gay, and bisexual aren’t the only marginalized sexualities, and transgender isn’t the only gender identity. In fact, there are many more of both!

* The "Q" sometimes stands for "questioning" and "transgender" is often thought of as an umbrella term itself (sometimes abbreviated "trans", or "trans*" in writing). Lots of asterisks, lots of exceptions, because hey – we’re talking about lots of different folks with different lived experiences to be inclusive of.
What does intersex mean?
At Risk

According to data from the 2015 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), of surveyed LGB students:

- 10% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property
- 34% were bullied on school property
- 28% were bullied electronically
- 23% of LGB students who had dated or went out with someone during the 12 months before the survey had experienced sexual dating violence in the prior year
- 12% of LGB students didn’t go to school because of safety concerns, compared with 5% of heterosexual students (in a 30 day period)
At Risk

- 40% of the homeless youth identify as LGBT
- Rates of substance abuse are 2-4 times higher among LGBTQ youth than their heterosexual peers
- Higher rates of cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use, and are also more likely to use street drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine and injection drugs
- (Caputi, Smith, Strathdee and Ayers, 2018)
Attempted Suicide (age 11-19)

- 17.6% female adolescents
- 9.8% male adolescents
- 50.8% transgender male adolescents
- 41.8% non-binary adolescents who identified as not exclusively male or female
- 29.9% transgender female adolescents
- 27.9% questioning adolescents

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2018)
What Do LGBTQ+ Persons Need?

• They need supportive families, friends, and communities
• They deserve support at school and at work
• They want basic civil rights
• They need you to be their ally
• What else do they need, deserve or want?
6 Themes in an LGBTQ+ Affirming Practice Approach:

**Attitudes**

1. Same gender sexual desires and behaviors are viewed as a normal variation in human sexuality.

2. The adoption of a LGBTQ identity is a positive outcome of any process in which an individual is developing a gender or sexual identity.
Knowledge

3. Service providers should not automatically assume a client’s sexual orientation or gender identity (pronouns).

4. It is important to understand the coming out process and its variations.
6 Themes in an LGBTQ+ Affirming Practice Approach:

Skills

5. Practitioners need to be able to deal with their own racism, sexism, biases and queerphobia.

6. When assessing a client, practitioners should not automatically assume that the client is heterosexual, male or female.
Addressing Religion

- Helping Professionals with religious objections to working with LGBTQ+ people should consult code(s) of ethics.
- Critical self-reflection
- Cultural humility
- Continuing education
- Apply religious principles (social justice, non-judgmental, unconditional love)
Being an Ally

Allies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society’s patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns.

Allies include men who work to end sexism, white people who work to end racism, heterosexual people who work to end heterosexism, able-bodied people who work to end ableism, and so on.

Part of becoming an ally is also recognizing one’s own experience of oppression. For example, a white woman can learn from her experience of sexism and apply it in becoming an ally to people of colour, or a person who grew up in poverty can learn from that experience how to respect others’ feelings of helplessness because of a disability.

(Bishop, 2001).
5 TIPS FOR BEING AN ALLY
What Does it Take to Be an Ally?

- Being willing to make mistakes—and to keep on trying. Being an ally means that sometimes you don't know what it means to be an ally so you keep asking questions, keep researching on your own—keep educating yourself.

- Being willing to be uncomfortable. You may be the odd one out, but it's important to remain committed to uncovering the role you hold even if it means making a role for yourself.

- Choosing to keep confronting your own privilege. Understanding that the personal is political—meaning that all of our choices either work to support social justice or detract from it. Being conscious takes effort.
Intersectionality
Intersectionality

- Intersectionality is a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages.
- It takes into account people’s overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face.
The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex
- Rather not say

Physically Attracted to
- Women/Femininity
- Men/Masculinity
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women/Femininity
- Men/Masculinity
- Other Gender(s)

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

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
Coming Out Stars
Laverne Cox  (8:29)

TO FIND MESSAGES OF HOPE AND SUPPORT VISIT: IT GETS BETTER PROJECT
WWW.ITGETSBETTER.ORG
The Coming Out Process

6 Stages (Cass):

Identity Awareness  Identity Comparison  Identity Tolerance  Identity Acceptance  Identity Pride  Identity Synthesis
The Coming Out Process

If someone comes out to you...

**Do:**
1. Know this is a sign of huge trust! (Yay!)
2. Check-in on how confidential this is. (Do other people know? Is this a secret?)
3. Remember that the gender/sexuality is just one dimension (of many) of who they are.
4. Show interest and curiosity about this part of them that they are sharing with you.
5. Ask them how you can best support them.

**Don’t:**
1. Say “I always knew,” or downplay the significance of their sharing with you.
2. Go tell everyone, bragging about your “new trans friend.”
3. Forget that they are still the person you knew, befriended or loved before.
4. Ask probing questions, or cross personal barriers you wouldn’t have crossed earlier.
5. Assume you know why they came to you.
More on Being an Ally

• Don’t make assumptions or judgments.
• Be willing to listen. Be willing to talk.
• Confront your own prejudices, even if it is uncomfortable to do so.
• Defend the civil rights of LGBT+ persons.
• Challenge homophobia and transphobia.
• Stand up against discrimination.
• Use inclusive and supportive language.
• Be open about your acceptance of others (silence perpetuates the status quo).
• Get political! Attend rallies, join social media groups, organize a movement, vote.
• When criticized or called out...listen, apologize, act accountably, and act differently going forward.
• Be committed to continuously educating yourself about LGBTQ+ issues & experiences.
Questions?

• Be sure to continue these conversations outside of this space.
• Try to challenge yourself to address negative or hurtful language and assumptions, even when you are nervous.
• Continue to educate yourself and others on these and other social justice issues.
Thank You!

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References


