



Understanding and Supporting Gender Diversity in the Schools

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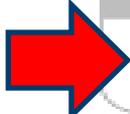
Session Objectives

- To heighten the participants' awareness of definitions and other issues related to gender diversity;
- To aid participants to begin to construct a knowledge base about the various experiences and challenges faced by gender diverse students at school, as well as how participants can support gender diverse students;
- To provide an opportunity for participants to apply their new-found awareness and knowledge.

NASP Practice Model

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Model for Services by School Psychologists



NASP's Position Statements

Safe Schools for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students (2014)

“NASP supports efforts to ensure that schools are safe and inclusive learning environments for all students, family members, and school staff, including those who are transgender or gender diverse. NASP respects a person’s right to express gender identity, and the right to modify gender expression when necessary for individual well-being. In addition, NASP supports all students’ right to explore and question their gender identity....NASP acknowledges that having a transgender identity or being perceived as gender diverse are not disorders, and that efforts to change a person’s gender identity are ineffective, harmful, and discriminatory. NASP works to ensure that settings in which school psychologists work are safe and welcoming and provide equal opportunity to all persons regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and any other personal identity or distinguishing characteristics.”

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth (2011)

“NASP believes that school psychologists are ethically obligated to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity for the development and expression of their personal identity in a school climate that is safe, accepting, and respectful of all persons and free from discrimination, harassment, violence, and abuse. To achieve this goal, education and advocacy must be used to reduce discrimination and harassment against LGBTQ youth by students and staff and promote positive social-emotional and educational development.”

NEA's Position

- Teaching Strategies (<http://www.nea.org/tools/30420.htm>)
 - “NEA believes that a great public school is a fundamental right of every child - free from intimidation and harassment, and safe for all students, including those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered.”
 - “There is only one real issue for educators: We are responsible for our students' safety and education. We must ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to achieve and thrive.”

Think/Pair/Share

- What is your understanding of what it means to identify as ‘transgender’ or ‘gender diverse’?
- How is ‘gender identity’ distinct from ‘sexual orientation?’
- When do individuals become aware of their gender identity?

Definitions

- Sex
 - Think biology – Female/Male
- Gender
 - Social construction that is culturally-mediated – Girl/Woman, Boy/Man
- Gender Identity
 - Lived/defined by the individual
- Gender Expression
 - How people communicate their gender identity to others
- Gender Role
 - Culturally-mediated ways people live out gender – Feminine/Masculine
- Sexual Orientation
 - One's primary psychological, social, emotional, and erotic attractions to other people

Definitions (continued)

- Cisgender
 - Gender identity matches the sex and gender one was assigned at birth
- Transgender
 - Gender identity does not match the sex and gender one was assigned at birth
 - Consistent, persistent, insistent
- Gender Diverse
 - Broader category that captures the range of gender identities
- LGBPTIQQQA2S (LGBTQ+)
 - Confusion regarding sexual orientation and gender identity
 - Pan-sexuality versus bi-sexuality

Transbasics

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=UXI9w0PbBX



Facts

- Estimates vary as to the number of people in the U.S. who identify as transgender or gender diverse
 - 0.3% self-identified in a recent health study (Gates, 2011)
 - 1%-3% of students self-identified in a recent SF HS health survey (Shields, 2009)
 - TIME magazine (June 2014)
 - 0.5% of U.S. population (i.e., 1.5 million people) identifies as transgender
 - 9% of adults report having a family member or close friend who identifies as TG (vs. 65% who report having a family member or close friend who identifies as lesbian or gay)
 - Taken altogether, these numbers make the momentum for change slow
 - These numbers may be underestimates for a variety of reasons
- Cuts across ethnic, racial, and class lines

General Issues

- Not much known about home issues, though experiences may parallel what has been observed in the LGB community
- Transphobia in the general culture and society
- Medical and psychological issues/barriers
 - DSM
 - Transsexualism → Gender Identity Disorder → Gender Dysphoria (current)
 - Stringent rules/guidelines (i.e., Harry Benjamin Standards of Care; WPATH – World Professional Association for Transgender Health)
 - Lack of knowledge, experience, training, sensitivity
 - 41% of TG adults report having attempted suicide [vs. 4.6% of the general population and 10%-20% of the LGB population (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011)]

Transgender Youth

- 80% of TG-identified adults knew they were 'different' before leaving elementary school
- Less than 4% of TG-identified persons realized they were TG after the age of 18
- Average age of trans-spectrum self-realization: 7.9
- Average age of learning the 'words' to communicate feelings: 15.5
- Consistent, persistent, insistent
- Transitions pre-puberty are social in-nature; some persons make seek medical transitions around puberty or later

Hyun, Raff, & Trier (2012)

“She’s too young to
decide to be a girl!”



... Said no one ever
to the cisgender girl.

Scottie

When Do Kids Know They're Transgender? Younger Than You'd Think.

NPR Radio Spot – May 8, 2015

<http://kuow.org/post/when-do-kids-know-they-re-transgender-younger-you-d-think>

Transitioning and Mental Health

- <http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2015/03/10/3631788/letting-transgender-kids-transition-is-for-their-own-good/>

Allowing Transgender Youth To Transition Improves Their Mental Health, Study Finds

BY **ZACK FORD**  POSTED ON MARCH 10, 2015 AT 11:22 AM



School Issues

- Transphobia – Bullying, biased remarks, harassment
 - 38% report feeling unsafe at school because of climate
 - 35% report avoiding gender-specific spaces because of climate
 - >60% report avoiding EC activities and school functions
 - 56% heard negative gender expression remarks
 - 33% heard negative transgender-specific remarks
 - 56% heard negative gender expression remarks from adults
 - 55% verbally harassed in the past year
 - 23% physically harassed in the past year
 - 49% LGBT report cyberbullying secondary to SO or GI/GE in the past year
 - 57% LGBT did not report incidents
 - 62% who did report indicated school staff did nothing in response

[GLSEN 2013 National Climate Survey](#)

School Issues

- Discriminatory School Policies & Practices
 - 56% report experience anti-LGBT policies & practices
 - 28% report being disciplined for PDA
 - 18% prevented from attending a dance or function
 - 18% restricted from promoting GSA
 - 42% prevented from using declared name
 - 59% required to use restrooms and/or locker rooms based on GA
 - 32% prevented from wearing clothes considered inappropriate based on GA

[GLSEN 2013 National Climate Survey](#)

Effects of a Hostile Climate

- Three times more likely to have missed school in the past month
- Have lower GPAs than non-harassed peers
- Twice as likely to report not to pursue PSE
- Report higher levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem
- Report higher rates of substance use/abuse and risk-taking behaviors

Legal & Policy Matters

- Title IX (Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, 2002)
 - U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights considers gender identity and gender expression as protected classes under Title IX
 - The DOE-OCR and the U.S. DOJ have filed and won lawsuits in this regard
- Equal Access Act (1984)
 - Equal access to extracurricular activities – religious and secular – in public schools
- California's AB 1266 (2013)
 - A pupil must be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities, including athletic teams and competitions, and use facilities consistent with his or her gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the pupil's records

Legal & Policy Matters

- FERPA
 - According to Lambda Legal, students (age 18+) and/or parents or legal guardians have the right to request that a school change the name and gender marker on one's records if they are incorrect, misleading, or violate one's privacy (34 C.F.R. section 99.7(a)(2)(ii))
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
 - Gender identity is not a disability in-and-of itself
 - Focus on disability in the 504 plan, not on gender identity
 - If the disability for which you are seeking accommodations centers on mental health sequelae associated with one's gender identity and that impacts one's education, it would be appropriate to develop a 504 plan in this situation
 - http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Zirkel_MA15.pdf

Legal & Policy Matters (continued)

- Anti-bullying bills
 - [Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act](#)
- High school athletic associations
 - As of September 10, 2015, 35 states have transgender-inclusive policies in place pertaining to participation in high school athletics
 - For more information, see [TRANS*ATHLETE K-12](#)
- Minnesota State High School League (December 2014)
 - http://www.mshsl.org/mshsl/news/transgender_policy.pdf
 - Takes effect for the 2015-2106 academic year
 - Allows participation in high school athletics of all students regardless of gender identity and gender expression
 - Each participating member school must determine the appropriate gender team for participants requesting transgender consideration

Transgender Sports Policy

<http://espn.com/video/clip?id=12568947>

Outside The Lines: Transgender athletes and sports policy



Raising Ryland

- <http://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2015/03/17/digital-shorts-parenting-transgender-child-orig.cnn?sr=fbdwtransp>



Mom: I'm Not A Girl

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Si5kAnLyKeg&feature=share>

How To Be Supportive

- Personal reflection and professional development
- Policy development
 - Non-discrimination policies
 - Anti-harassment policies
 - Other school policies (e.g., field trips; restroom/locker room use; athletic teams)
- Advocacy
 - Acceptance
 - Gender non-specific spaces and safe zones (e.g., GSAs)

How To Be Supportive

- Psychological safety (adapted from Reeves & Brock, 2011)
 - Schools
 - School climate (respect, acceptance, valuing versus tolerance)
 - School connectedness
 - Mental health
 - Individual
 - Honoring the individual
 - Name and pronouns
 - Dress and other forms of gender expression
 - Privacy
 - Resiliency – internal and external
 - Intervention
 - Ongoing support

How To Be Supportive

- Education
 - Administration, faculty, and staff
 - Students
 - Families
 - Records
- Curriculum and Instruction
 - Inclusion of gender diverse persons in curriculum
 - Teaching to and through the cultural/identity lenses of students
- Collaboration
 - Home
 - Community agencies

Schools in Transition

- <https://www.genderspectrum.org/staging/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf>

Gender Spectrum (2015)

Wrap Up

- Gender diverse persons are a part of school communities at numerous levels;
- Gender diverse persons are vulnerable to discrimination and harassment at school, at home, and in the community, which may contribute to challenges in the various areas of their lives;
- Gender diverse persons are also resilient;
- School psychologists, other school-based mental health professionals, administrators, and teachers can and **SHOULD** support gender diverse persons in schools in multiple ways;
- Resources exist and are accumulating to assist school-based mental health professionals in their efforts to optimize the potential for success of all persons.

Resources

- [National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)](#)
- [Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\)](#)
- [Transparenthood \(Blog\)](#)
- [TransActive Gender Center](#)
- [Welcoming Schools](#)
- [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center](#)
- [TransYouth Family Allies](#)
- [Philadelphia Trans-Health Conference](#)
- [TNET – PFLAG’s Transgender Network](#)

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Questions?

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