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# Creating Inclusive Programming and Practice for LGBTQ Youth Through Awareness

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RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER FOR PATHWAYS TO POSITIVE FUTURES



# Creating Inclusive Programming and Practice for LGBTQ Youth Through Awareness

July 09, 2011

**Presented By:** L. Kris Gowen, PhD & Christian Rummell, MPA



# Agenda

1. Definitions
2. Why Consider LGBTQQ as separate populations?
3. Protective Factors
4. Strategies for Support
5. Additional Resources
6. Q & A



# Definitions

## Sexual Orientation

- L = Lesbian
- G = Gay
- B = Bisexual

## Gender Orientation

- T = Transgender
- “Gender non-conforming”
- Genderqueer

## Either/Both

- Q = Queer
- Q = Questioning



# Definitions

**Homophobia:** a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward gay and lesbian individuals (Ritter & Terndrup, 2002).

**Transphobia:**

The irrational fear of those who are gender diverse and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity. (SAMHSA)

**Heterosexism:** Institutionalized and cultural homophobia: the legitimization of prejudice on the basis of non-heterosexual orientation through overt social practices and systems and covert social mores and customs (Brown and Colbourne, 2005)



# Why Consider LGBTQQ Youth as Separate Populations?



What are some of the negative outcomes that impact LGBTQQ youth disproportionately?



# Health Disparities

- Alcohol & Substance Use, DUI
- Tobacco Use
- Depression & Suicide Ideation
- Violence/Dating Violence
- Teen pregnancy
- STIs/HIV

*Note: Very little data on trans youth*



# Stress

## Verbal and Physical Abuse in School Settings (GLSEN 2009)

- 3/4 hear derogatory comments in school “often”
- 40% were physically harassed
- 53% cyberbullied

## Drug and Alcohol Use

- Higher rates, earlier initiation (Garofalo, 1998)
- Meth Use Ever (CDC, 2011)
  - » Heterosexual (3.5%)
  - » Gay/Lesbian (21.5%)
  - » Bisexual (15%)
  - » Not Sure (13%)

## Increased Risk of HIV (MSM)

- 14% African American
- 7% Latino (CDC, 2008)

## Suicidal Ideation and Suicide

- Attempts past 12 mo. (CDC, 2011):
  - » Heterosexual (6.5%)
  - » Gay/Lesbian (25%)
  - » Bisexual (28%)
  - » Not Sure (18.5%)





# Family Rejection

- In CA Bay area, 30% of LGB youth report being rejected by their families
- LGB young adults who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were:
  - » 8.5 times more likely to report having attempted suicide
  - » 6 times more likely to report high levels of depression
  - » 3.5 times more likely to use illegal drugs
  - » 3.5 times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse (Ryan, 2009)



# Social Interaction Anxiety

## Social Interaction Anxiety

(Safron and Pantalone, 2006)

- Characterized as “fear of initiating and maintaining social conversations and interactions with others”
- Barrier to receiving support that is available to them
- Reflects an important challenge for this population to fully utilize social supports even when these supports are available to them\*



# System Disparities

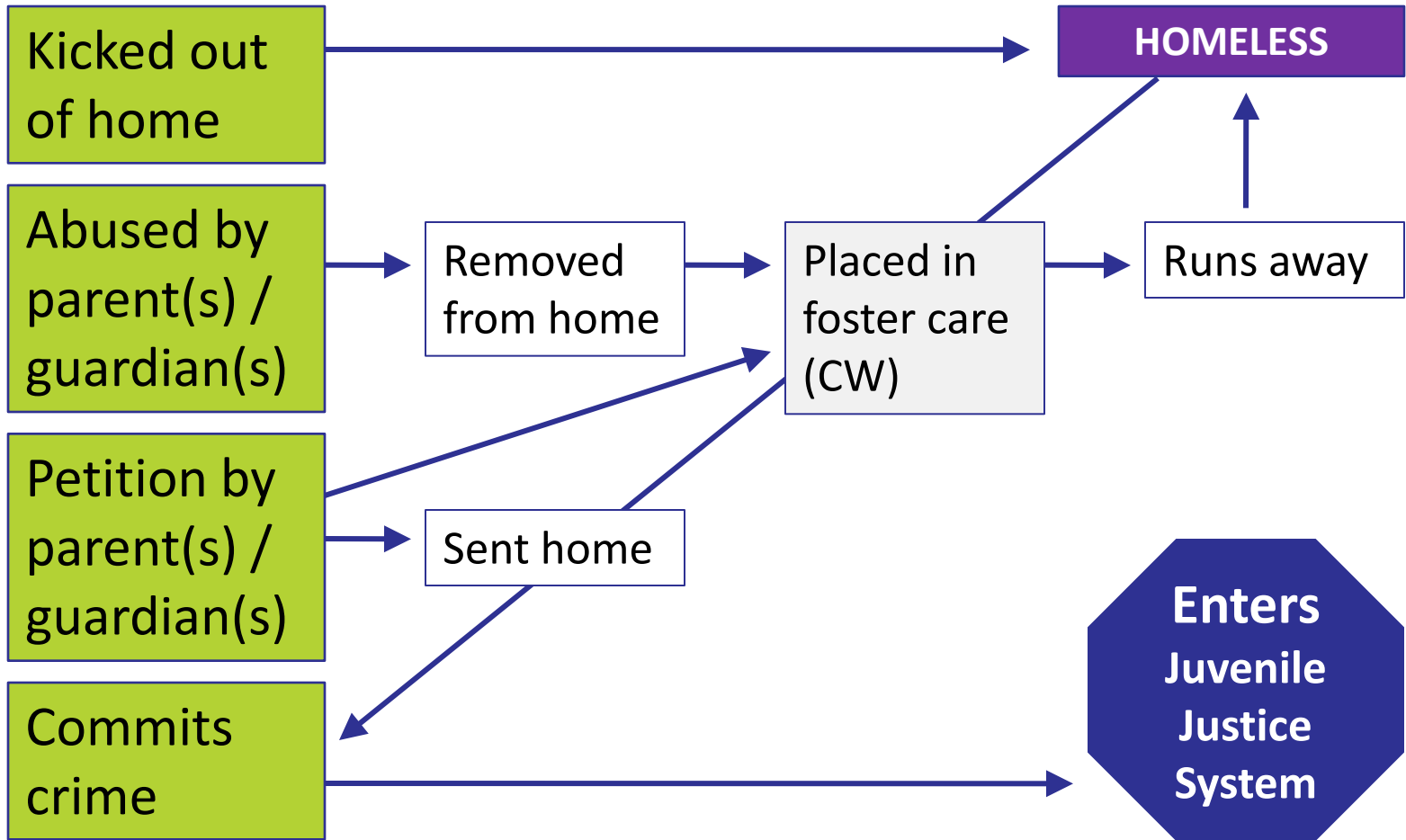
LGBTQQ youth are over-represented in:

- Corrections
- Foster care
- Homelessness
- Mental health



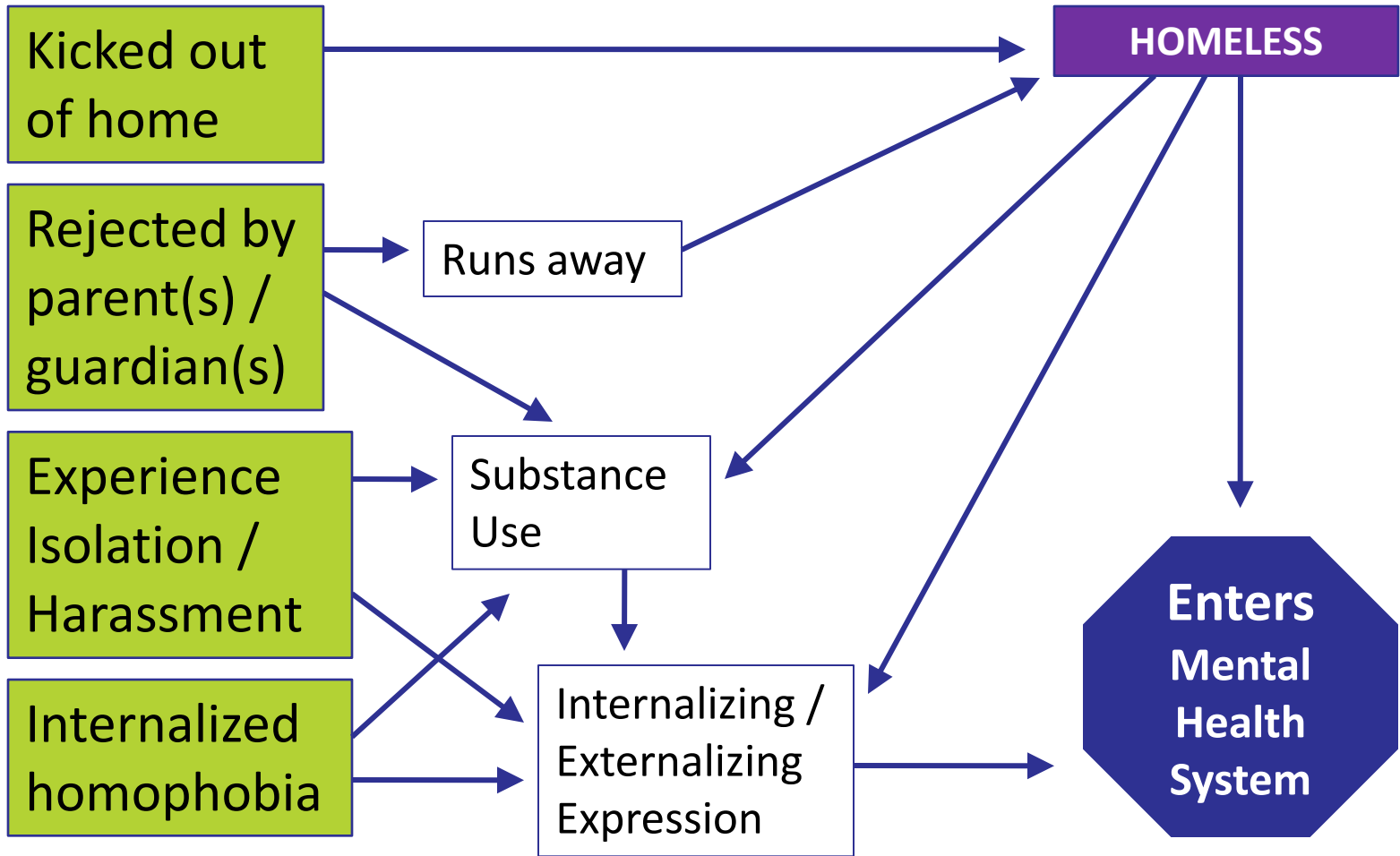
# Common Pathways

Source: Feinstein et al (2001)





# Common Pathways





# Protective Factors

- Not well studied
  - Less rigid gender roles (Bem)
  - Less violent heterosexual dating relationships (Diamond)
    - » Contradicts CDC findings
  - Increased resilience
  - Increased empathy
  - Sense of community, if opportunity is there
  - Gay-straight alliances in schools (GLSEN)
  - Supportive Adults (Ryan)



# Strategies for Support

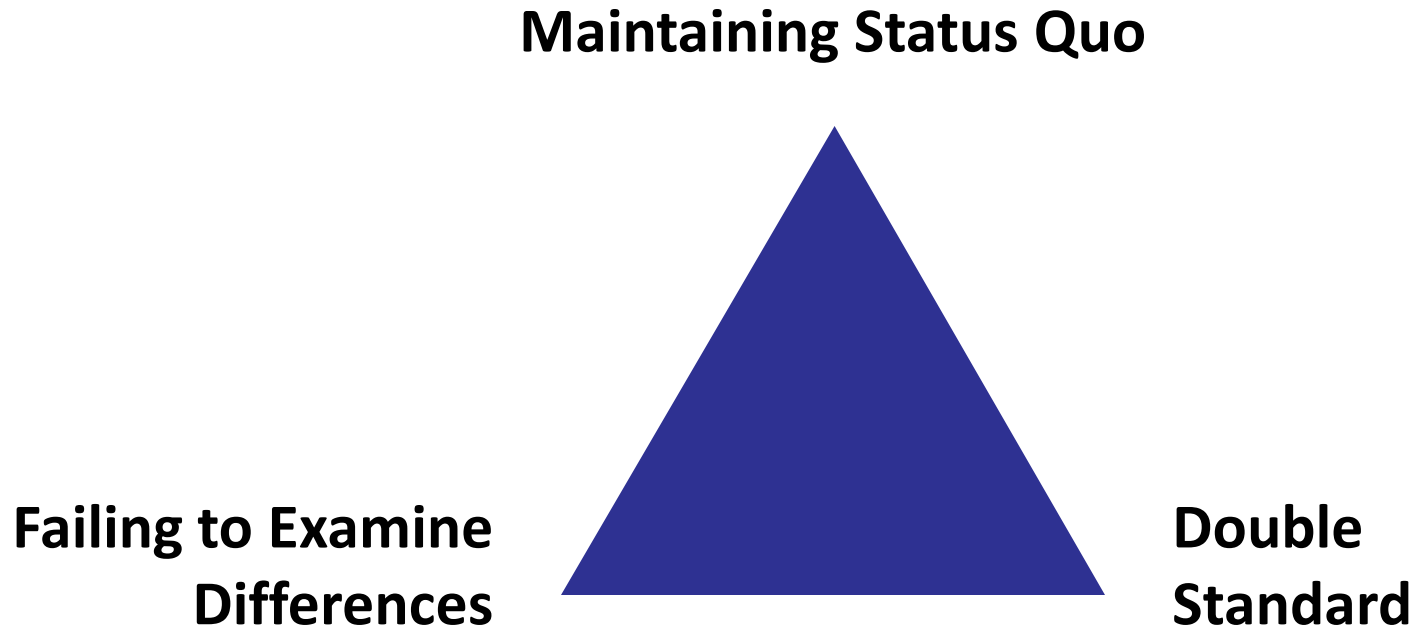


- Policy-Level Support
- Identity Development
- Program Climate
- Tips for Change



# What Causes These Disparities?

## The BIAS TRIANGLE



Bias-FREE Framework , Burke & Eichler (2006), [www.biasfree.org](http://www.biasfree.org)





# Policies/Guidelines: Supportive Services

What policies do most organizations have in place to reduce/prevent bias?

- Non-discrimination
- “Safe place”
- Confidentiality
- Others?

Needs of gender non-conforming youth may require more specific policies regarding intake procedures, housing, etc.



# Oregon Laws

## **Oregon Equality Act (2008)**

- Forbids discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation

## **Oregon Safe Schools Act (2009)**

- “protected classes” include sexual orientation, which includes real or perceived orientation, as well as gender identity

## **Oregon’s Sexuality Education Policy (2009)**

- Sexuality education must be “inclusive” of different “sexual orientations and gender roles.”



# Identity Development

Important to examine ways to support a young person during their process of understanding, accepting, and sharing their identity as a sexual minority



# Identity Development

## MALE GAY YOUTH (on average)

- Report same-sex feelings at age 10
- Begin to self-label at age 15
- First disclose their sexuality to others at age 17 (D'augelli, 2006)



## LESBIAN YOUTH (on average)

- Report same-sex feelings at age 11
- Begin to self-label at age 16
- First disclose sexuality to others at age 17 (D'augelli, 2006)



# Why is Support for Sexual Minority Identity Development Important?

*Many gay individuals are often unprepared, unsupported, and stigmatized in their search for a sexual minority identity.*

- Incongruence in an individual's affect, behavior, and cognitive processes during sexual minority identity development may create psychological tension and struggle (Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, and Braun, 2006)
- Gay youth that have successfully developed a solid sexual identity appear to show no significant difference in self-concept or self-esteem from heterosexual youth (Bernal and Coolhardt, 2005)



# Sexual Minority Identity Development Model

## Sexual Minority Identity Development

(McCarn & Fassinger, 1995):

### INDIVIDUAL

- Awareness
- Exploration
- Deepening /  
Commitment
- Internalization /  
Synthesis



### GROUP

- Awareness
- Exploration
- Deepening /  
Commitment
- Internalization /  
Synthesis



# STRATEGY: Person-Centered Approach

Counselors are encouraged to meet the client where he or she is, should also emphasize the youth's notion of self-concept, and believe in the client's ability to grow.

Youth service providers and mentors should also take a client-centered approach to working with young LGBTQQ people, especially when offering support to phases of sexual minority identity development.\*



# STRATEGY: Program Climate

As gay youth face stigma, negative social sanctions and stress, it becomes even more important for youth advocates to create safe and inclusive programs.

**Program Climate** can offer the “space” for LGBTQQ youth to work through their phases of sexual minority identity development and can offer opportunities to foster protective factors to assist them in overcoming external risks.





# STRATEGY: Program Climate

- Discuss your organization's policy on diversity
- Discuss your organization's confidentiality requirements
- Explore how your mentors can support a young person that is "coming out"
- Help mentors become aware of their own attitudes



# STRATEGY: Program Climate

- Raise your own awareness of issues
- Learn what resources are available to lesbian and gay youth in your community
- Develop a resource list for staff, mentors, and youth
- Watch your language
- Create guidelines to protect young people
- Be attentive to visible materials (National Mentoring Center, 2000)



# STRATEGY: Building Inclusive Programs

## **If you are just beginning the process:**

- Start small
- “Test the waters”
  - » Hold a discussion with identified key allies in your program (use a film or other medium)
  - » It Gets Better Project, Groundspark
  - » Figure out the comfort level and need in your agency and community (GLSEN, 1999)



# STRATEGY: Building Inclusive Programs

## **If you have decided to commit:**

- Raise awareness of others
- Work with a local advocacy coalition
- Hold individual workshops with stakeholders
- Study the issue of inclusivity in-depth by conducting a formal needs assessment



# STRATEGY: Building Inclusive Programs

## **If you are ready to be proactive:**

- Set up a strategic planning committee
- Tailor program changes to identified needs
- Focus language on issue of equality and ensuring all young people in your community are served



# Resources

- PSU Unbiased Services Project  
[www.rri.pdx.edu/Lgbtq/lgbtq\\_resources.php](http://www.rri.pdx.edu/Lgbtq/lgbtq_resources.php)
- GLSEN  
[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)
- SAMHSA/National Center for Cultural Competence  
[nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/LGBT\\_Brief.pdf](http://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/LGBT_Brief.pdf)



# Resources

1. **Association of Mentoring Professionals:** Creating Inclusive Mentoring Programs for Sexual Minority Youth
2. **EMT:** Mentoring Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth
3. **GLSEN:** Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Education Network
4. **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**
5. **National Mentoring Center:** Mentoring Sexual Minority Youth
6. **National Youth Advocacy Coalition**

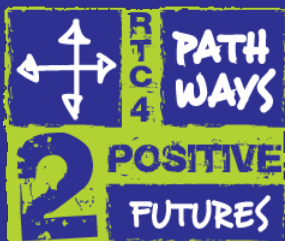


**Q & A**



**Thank you!**





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