LGBT Adolescence: Exercises in Rewriting Narratives

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Objectives

- . Determine story(ies) you want to write
- . Overview some cultures' stories about LGBT
- . Gather some facts about LGBT
- Understand unconscious bias
- Explore power of narrative construction for individuals, groups, culture
- . Engage in narrative writing and rewriting exercises
- Commit to writing, rewriting exercises

Warm-up: Narrative in this Workshop

- . Please share something about yourself
- What drew you to the day long session?
- . What do you want to do with what you learn?
- . How will you know if you have been successful?
- . Who will notice if you are successful?

What is sexual orientation?

What is gender identity?

Why is increased LGBT awareness critical today?

- . Teens are coming out earlier today
 - . '70s: people came out in their 30s (if at all)
 - . Now: kids come out as young as 11(or earlier)
 - . Trans kids come out later, often from 15 on
 - . Kids are more comfortable describing transgender feelings
- . Children usually feel first "crush" about 10- straight or gay
- . Share the information with others 12-14
- . Support and information they receive are critical to long term health

Why a need for more information?

- Because youth are coming out, parents, teachers, supporters
 - . Need accurate information on SO/GI
 - . Need to recognize their reactions count
 - . Cannot dismiss or ridicule
- . Homosexuality and bisexuality are part of normal variability in sexual orientation

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The old story to monitor against

- . Kids act or look different
- Are bullied verbally or physically
- Experience anxiety, depression
- Use maladaptive coping

 - CigarettesEating changes
 - . Alcohol
 - . Substance use
 - . Early sexual experimentation

Changing the narrative

- What do you do or say when you see the old story trying to take over a new kid?
- What can you do or say instead?

Family Acceptance Project

Unconscious bias

- . Can put words into our mouths
- . Can invite us to laugh when nothing is funny
- . Invites people to look away when bullying takes place
- . Invites us to blame the victim and not the bully
- . Invites us to ignore our obligation to fight bullying
- . May lead to destructive acts by closeted people

Family Acceptance Project Research

- . Identified 100 critical parent-child behaviors
- . About half supportive
- . About half rejecting
- . When parents try to help their children fit in with straight peers, they use rejecting behaviors

Supporting behaviors

- . Talk about their LGBT identity
- . Express affection when they come out
- . Support child even when you feel uncomfortable
- . Advocate for child when mistreated
- Bring child to LGBT support functions
- . Connect child with adult role model
- . Find supportive congregation
- . Welcome LGBT friends
- . Believe they can have a happy life
- . Support child's gender expression
 - Family Acceptance Project

The Power of Stories

- . We tell stories of and to ourselves
- Our families
- . Our cultures
- To share values
- . To inspire
- . To warn
- . To provide models for life

Cultures Tell Stories too: The Power of Stories

- . Twin spirited Native Americans
 - . LGBT people were seen as closer to god who had neither male nor female gender
 - . Two spirited people were parts of many tribes
- . Fa'fa'ine of Samoa
 - . Gay men provided care for sibling's children
- . Nanshoku of Japan
 - . Mentoring of young male trainees by samurai
 - . Sometimes involved sexual relationship

US Cultural Stories around LGBT

- Sin
 - For The Bible Tells Me So-documentary
- . Criminal behavior