

Reaching Out to our Gay and Transgender Students

Course Outline

Course Description

According to statistics gathered by GLSEN, the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network, ten per cent of the population is gay, bisexual, or transgender. These students come to school with the needs of any other student. They need to feel safe and accepted in order to learn. When a child senses that they are not accepted by their peers they often seek the advice of someone they can talk to in a confidential setting. This course is imperative as it will enable any counselor or educator to be a reliable source for those youth who feel marginalized due to their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Today there are children who have gay parents who need to feel safe from the attitudes that prevail in many communities. There will be many supplemental sources and websites that will enrich the knowledge of all who take this class.

Objectives

- Identify and address prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes which exist in our society
- Discover one's own biases and realize how tacit assumptions are part of everyday life
- Define what intersexual is and how it relates to gender non-conforming issues
- Identify the acronym used for this class and the ways that they are misperceived by many
- Create lessons that will be inclusive to the gay and transgender population
- Investigate Federal and State laws regarding the gay and transgender citizens of this country
- Compare views and opinions concerning the Nature verses Nurture debate that exists concerning sexual orientation
- Analyze the latest research and scientific findings regarding Nature verses Nurture and come to a conclusion
- Explore the topic of bisexuality and its history
- Create dialogues with those students who are bi-curious and/or questioning
- Identify the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
- Identify the binary boxes that exist in our society
- Explore the plight of those LGBTQI students of color
- Evaluate resources and websites that deal with gay and transgender youth
- Propose activities to train staff about the "coming out" process
- Develop an action plan that will create a safer school environment for all
- Identify the common slurs that exist and are part of the vernacular heard in the hallways
- Create a script that will help promote the development of Gay Straight Alliances in all secondary schools

Curriculum Design & Time Requirements

This is a 45 hour, three credit graduate level course.

Course Materials

The required textbook for this course is *The Right to Be Out: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in America's Public Schools 2nd ed.*, by Stuart Biegel.

Session Outline

Session 1: Uncovering our Own Biases

Content:

- Understand the link between tacit assumptions and stereotypes
- Share the Boat Activity which helps us to note the ways that we stereotype others
- Examine the “isms” that create one to prejudge others
- Review/explore classroom resources that deal with issues of tolerance and diversity
- Activity about why we hate, and the violence that ensues
- Homophobia will be addressed at this time
- Reflection and web article review

Session 2: Defining the Acronym LGBTQI

Content:

- The following terms will be defined and explored:
 - Gay
 - Lesbian
 - Bisexual
 - Transgender
 - Queer
 - Questioning
 - Intersex
- Reflection and web article review

Session 3: The Absence of LGBT Education in the Classrooms

Content:

- Famous LGBT people in history
- LGBT role models in today's society
- The history of the movement
- Status of human rights concerning LGBT population
- The absence of homosexuality in sex education
- A glimpse into the history of HIV/AIDS in this country
- Compare the differences and similarities between the civil rights movement of the sixties and the gay rights movement of the day

Session 4: Sexual Orientation- Nature or Nurture

Content:

- Perceptions of the past
- Scientific Research- Genetic/Hormonal/ Birth Order
- The need to know and why should anyone care

- How to counsel students when asked this question
- Reflection

Session 5: Bisexuality or Bi-Curious? Understanding the “B” in LGBT

Content:

- The Kinsey report: the study that uncovered human sexual behavior
- Living in a binary society
- Understanding bisexuality in the animal kingdom
- Helping those students who are bi-curious or questioning
- The need for succinct labels for gender and sexual orientation
- Viewpoints on society’s discomfort with bisexuality
- Reflection

Session 6: Transgender 101- Dealing with the Most Marginalized Groups

Content:

- Dissect the terms biological sex, gender identity and gender expression
- Scientific research disclosed
- Latest psychological research that recommends certain approaches
- Understand binary boxes that are in place for society’s gender roles
- Crossing gender lines and the bullying that ensues
- Watch clips from the video “Middle Sex”
- Research the laws that protect transgender citizens in this country
- Reflection

Session 7: Reaching Out to a Transgender Youth

Content:

- PGP and birth names vs. gender neutral or chosen names
- Sensitizing the staff to the student’s needs and creating a game plan for this person
- Where does the bullying take place for these youth?
- Creating a safe school for these students
- Share a plan that you put in place for a student who is gender non-conforming

Session 8: Reaching Out to Students who are Coming Out

Content:

- The “coming out” sequence of events
- Sensitive issues that arise for every grade level
- Support groups that can be organized for their benefit
- Self-destructive behaviors that are common for this group
- Script Assignment

Session 9: Creating a Workshop to Educate the Staff

Content:

- Steps to ensure a safe school at every level
- Educating the Administration
- Lead a workshop on diversity and this sensitive issue
- Common objections to LGBT issues and essential strategies to deal with them
- Programs that are designed specifically for elementary school staff
- Learn about Gay/Straight Alliances and their structure

Session 10: Support Groups that Deal with the LGBT Community/Final Integration Project

Content:

- Information about PFLAG
- Find local agencies in your community that offer support groups for teens
- Explore GLSEN and its website
- Uncover one's district policy concerning harassment and discrimination
- DASA- the Dignity Act of NYS will be shared
- Final Integration Project explained - an action plan to create a safer schools

Grading

Assignment	Points	Grading Scale	
Group and Classroom Participation	35	108-116	A
Written Assignments	56	99-107	B
Reviews/Project	25	89-98	C
Total Points	116	81-88	D
		0-80	F

Student Requirements

1. Participation: Actively participate in all class activities.
2. Assignments: Complete all readings, questions and reflection assignments.
3. Final Project: Students will complete an action plan where they will share a diagnostic tool and short-term goals providing concrete initiatives to create safer schools

Student Academic Integrity

Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and is subject to academic disciplinary action.