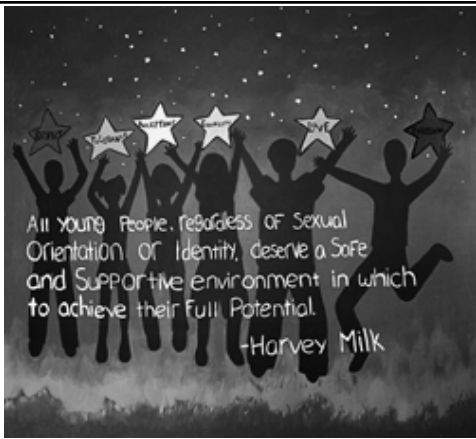


Sexual Minority Youth





Sexual Minorities: Terminology

- Usually referred to by the acronym LGBT
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender



Sexual Minorities Terminology

- Sometimes LGBTQ
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Questioning or sometimes Queer

Sexual Minorities Terminology

- Sometimes LGBTQI2-S
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Questioning or Queer
- Intersex
- 2-Spirit

Sexual Minorities Terminology

- Lesbian—a woman who forms physical and emotional relationships with some women



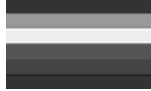
The labrys, or double-bladed battle axe, was a symbol used in the ancient civilization of Minoan Crete (sometimes portrayed as having certain matriarchal tendencies), and in ancient Greek legends it was supposedly used by Scythian Amazon women warriors (sometimes said to be ruled by two queens at a time). It can also be associated with the Greek goddess Demeter (Ceres in Roman mythology) and occasionally the Greek goddess Artemis (Diana in Roman mythology). The labrys is often used used to represent lesbian and feminist strength and self-sufficiency.

Sexual Minorities Terminology

- **Gay**—commonly used to describe men, refers to people who form physical and emotional relationships with persons of the same gender.

One of the oldest symbols which originated from the Nazi concentration camp badges that homosexuals were required to wear on their clothing. It is estimated that as many as 220,000 gays and lesbians perished alongside the 6,000,000 Jews whom the Nazis exterminated in their death camps during World War II

Rainbow flag, designed in 1978 for San Francisco's Gay Freedom Celebration. The colors of the rainbow are displayed as horizontal stripes, with red at the top and purple at the bottom. It represents the diversity of gays and lesbians around the world. Red stands for life, orange stands for healing, yellow stands for the sun, green stands for nature, blue stands for harmony, and purple stands for the soul.



Sexual Minorities Terminology

- **Other symbols**

- Lower case Greek letter lambda. The symbol was originally chosen by the Gay Activists Alliance of New York in 1970
- "L" stands for "liberation."
- The Greek Spartans believed that the lambda represented unity.
- The Romans took it as meaning "the light of knowledge shining into the darkness of ignorance."
- The charged energy of the gay movement.
- The synergy which results when gays and lesbians work together
- The notion that straights and gays, or gays and lesbians, or any pairing of these three, are on different wavelengths
- iconic rendering of the scales of justice



Sexual Minorities Terminology

- **Bisexual**—someone who is attracted physically and emotionally to persons of the same and different genders. Bisexual people are not necessarily attracted equally to both men and women and are not always attract



Sexual Minorities Terminology

- Transgender—an umbrella term that includes transsexual and gender-nonconforming people.
- Transsexual—refers to someone whose gender identity is different from the biological sex they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals may change their physical gender through hormones, surgery, or dress.



Sexual Minorities Terminology

- Questioning – someone who is uncertain yet of their sexual identity
- Queer – developed primarily for social/political/intellectual purposes, this umbrella terms seeks to encompass rather than compartmentalize a broad range of sexual identities, behaviors and expressions

Sexual Minorities Terminology

- Intersex – refers to people who are born with atypical or ambiguous genitalia. An older term, "hermaphrodite," is now considered inappropriate.
- 1 percent of live births exhibit some degree of sexual ambiguity. Between 0.1% and 0.2% of live births are ambiguous enough to become the subject of specialist medical attention, including surgery to disguise their sexual ambiguity.
- The prevalence of intersex "restricted to those conditions in which chromosomal sex is inconsistent with phenotypic sex, or in which the phenotype is not classifiable as either male or female" is about 0.018%.

Sexual Minorities Terminology

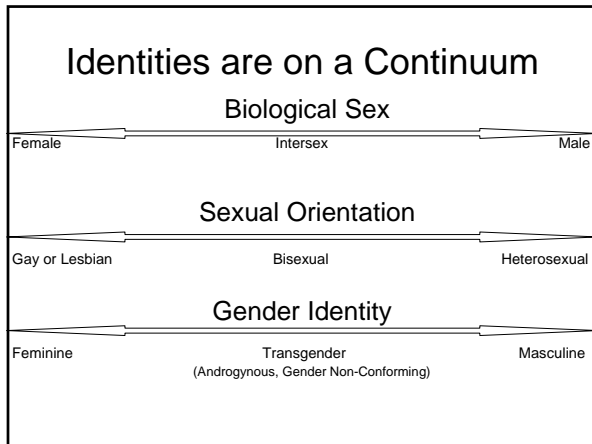
- Two-Spirit – A term for Native American people who identify as transgender.
- It may include gay, lesbian or bisexual people, but the term does not definitively refer to sexual-orientation
- Two-Spirit people had positive and elevated status among many Native American tribes prior to the arrival of the Europeans.

Sexual Minorities Terminology

- Sexual Orientation—how a person identifies sexually—meaning the physical and emotional ways we are attracted to persons of the same gender, another gender, or all genders.
- Sexual orientation and sexual behavior are not necessarily the same. Not everyone acts on their attractions.

Three Concepts Related to Sexual Orientation

-  Attraction
- Behavior 
- Identity – what you call or label yourself 



Identities are on a Continuum

- Important to keep the three concepts related to sexual orientation and the continuum of identity separate.
- Someone might have sex with someone of the same gender but not identify as lesbian or gay.
- As psychologists, it is important to target our interventions toward *behavior*.

Culturally Sensitive Practices

- Refer to student's relationships as *same-sex* or *same-gender* vs. gay or lesbian relationships as a sexual identity may not be established yet.
- Due to the association with a former psychological disorder, *homosexual* is very loaded. Use *gay* or *lesbian* instead.
- Avoid using terms such as *sexual preference*, *sexual lifestyle* or *choice*.

Risk Factors for LGBT Students

- A sense of difference
- Social isolation
- Invisibility
- Lack of Role Models
- Misunderstanding
- Myth
- Lack of information
- Stigmatization
- Harassment & Violence
- Discrimination
- Rejection by Family
- Homelessness
- Depression & Suicide
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse
- STDs
- Religious Confliction

Risk Factors for LGBT Students



- Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network
- See *From Teasing to Torment: New Survey Demonstrates Severity of Bullying and Harassment in Michigan Schools*
- <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/1880.html>



Risk Factors for LGBT Students



- 2007 National School Climate Survey
- 86.2% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed,
- 44.1% reported being physically harassed and
- 22.1% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation
- 73.6% heard derogatory remarks such as "faggot" or "dyke" frequently or often at school.

Risk Factors for LGBT Students



- 2007 National School Climate Survey
- More than half (60.8%) of students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (38.4%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression.
- 31.7% of LGBT students missed a class and 32.7% missed a day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe, compared to only 5.5% and 4.5%, respectively, of a national sample of secondary school students.

Risk Factors for LGBT Students



- 2007 National School Climate Survey
- The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (2.8 versus 2.4).

Positive Interventions & Supports: Gay-Straight Alliance Groups (GSA)

- Students in schools with a Gay-Straight Alliance:
- reported hearing fewer homophobic remarks,
- experienced less harassment and assault because of their sexual orientation and gender expression,
- were more likely to report incidents of harassment and assault to school staff,
- were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation or gender expression,
- were less likely to miss school because of safety concerns
- and reported a greater sense of belonging to their school community.

**Positive Interventions & Supports:
Supportive School Personnel**

- The presence of supportive staff contributed to a range of positive indicators including:
- fewer reports of missing school,
- greater academic achievement,
- higher educational aspirations
- and a greater sense of belonging to their school community.

Positive Interventions & Supports

- Despite the positive benefits of these interventions,
- Only about a third of students (36.3%) reported having a Gay-Straight Alliance at school.
- The same number of students (36.3%) could identify six or more supportive educators
- and only a fifth (18.7%) attended a school that had a comprehensive safe school policy

**Positive Interventions & Supports: Linking
Students with Community Supports**

- Affirmations
290 W. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale, MI 48220
(248) 398-7105



www.GoAffirmations.org

Positive Interventions & Supports: Linking Students with Community Supports

- Triangle Foundation
19641 West Seven Mile Road, Detroit, MI
(313) 537-7000



www.Tri.org

Positive Interventions & Supports: Linking Students with Community Supports

- Ruth Ellis Center
77 Victor Street Highland Park, MI 48203
(313) 252-1950



www.RuthEllisCenter.com

Positive Interventions & Supports: Linking Students with Community Supports

- GLSEN
www.glsen.org



- Human Rights Campaign
www.hrc.org



Positive Interventions & Supports: Linking Students with Spiritual Supports

- Because many LGBT youth experience spiritual confliction, it may help to be aware of welcoming and affirming religious denominations.
- Most major religions have progressive branches that are supportive to the LGBT community.

Positive Interventions & Supports: Linking Students with Spiritual Supports

- Denominations known for being particularly welcoming and affirming are:

Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC)



United Church of Christ (UCC)



The Episcopal Church



Unitarian-Universalist Church (U-U)

Positive Interventions & Supports: Other Suggestions

- Establish your office as a *safe zone*



Positive Interventions & Supports:
Other Suggestions

- Do not tolerate or ignore derogatory language, even when not directed toward a specific individual
- E.g. "That's so gay!"

- <http://www.thinkb4youspeak.com>

Positive Interventions & Supports:
Other Suggestions

- Helping the student that wants to "come out."
- Empathize and support the student without being directive.
- Help the student realistically explore the potential consequences.
- Discuss the reality of potential rejection by family and friends and the increased likelihood of homelessness among LGBT youth

Positive Interventions & Supports:
Other Suggestions

- Helping the student that wants to "come out."

- For the average student who is reliant on parents for financial support, it may not be a good idea unless they are relatively confident that their parents will be supportive and non-rejecting.
